# On the Way Home?

## *FEANTSA Monitoring Report on Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe*

2012

**FEANTSA**, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless is an umbrella of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe. It is the only major European network that focuses on homelessness at the European level.

FEANTSA

# Contents


Executive Summary ..... 4

1. Introduction ..... 6

1.0.1 Scope of the Report ..... 6
1.0.2 EU Policy Context ..... 6
1.0.3 The Rise of Homeless Strategies in Europe ..... 8
1.0.4 Methodology ..... 8
1.0.5 Limits of the Methodology ..... 9
1.0.6 Quality of Homelessness Data Available in the EU ..... 10
1.0.7 Definition of Homelessness: The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion ..... 11
1.0.8 Definitions Used at National and Sub-National Level ..... 13

2. Analysys ..... 15

2.1 Part 1: Main Trends in Homelessness (Extent and Profiles) ..... 15

2.1.1 Overview of Trends in the Extent of Homelessness Over the Past 1-5 Years ..... 15
2.1.2 Group 1: Increase in Homelessness Over Past 1 – 5 Years ..... 16
2.1.3 The Role of the Financial and Economic Crisis ..... 21
2.1.4 Group 2: Reduction in Homelessness Over the Past 1-5 Years ..... 23
2.1.5 Group 3: Stable Levels of Homelessness Over Past 1–5 Years ..... 24
2.1.6 Group 4: Overall Trend is Unclear ..... 24
2.1.7 Overview of Trends in Profile of Homeless Population Over the Past 1-5 Years ..... 24
Homelessness amongst Immigrants ..... 26
Youth Homelessness ..... 29
Women's Homelessness ..... 31
"New Entrants" to Homelessness as a Result of the Crisis ..... 32
Homelessness amongst Families ..... 33
Additional Changes in Homeless Profiles ..... 34

2.2 Analysis Part 2: Homeless Policies ..... 35

2.2.1 Integrated Strategies to Tackle Homelessness ..... 35
Overview of Existing Integrated Homelessness Strategies in Europe ..... 35
Overview of European Countries Without An Integrated Homelessness Strategy ..... 44
Overview of National/Regional Contexts Where Progress Has Been Made Towards an Integrated Homelessness Strategy ..... 47
2.2.2 The Evidence Base Supporting Homeless Policies in Europe ..... 48
2.2.3 The Housing-Led Approach and Targeted Prevention: Key Thematic Priorities for Homeless Policies in Europe ..... 61
Housing-Led Approaches to Homelessness ..... 61
Housing-Led Approaches in Europe ..... 63
Targeted Prevention ..... 68
Prevention of Evictions ..... 68
Discharge from Institutions ..... 71
2.2.4 Quality in Homeless Services ..... 73
2.2.5 Coercive Homeless Policies ..... 76

3. Conclusions and Recommendations ..... 79

Annex 1: Toolkit for developing an integrated strategy to tackle homelessness ..... 84
Annex 2: Core Variables for Homeless Information Systems ..... 86
Annex 3: Questionnaire ..... 87

# Executive Summary

This is a report on the extent and nature of homelessness in the EU's Member States, which analyses policy progress in tackling homelessness over recent years. It is based on the input of national experts from 21 countries who are members of FEANTSA's Administrative Council.



**Part 1** of the report provides an overview of the EU policy context and describes the rise of integrated homelessness strategies in Europe over the past two decades. It explains the research methodology and definitions of homelessness used.

**Part 2** of the report is a 2-section analysis of the current state of homelessness and homeless policies in Europe.

Section 2.1 explores main trends in the extent of homelessness and the profile of homeless people in the EU.

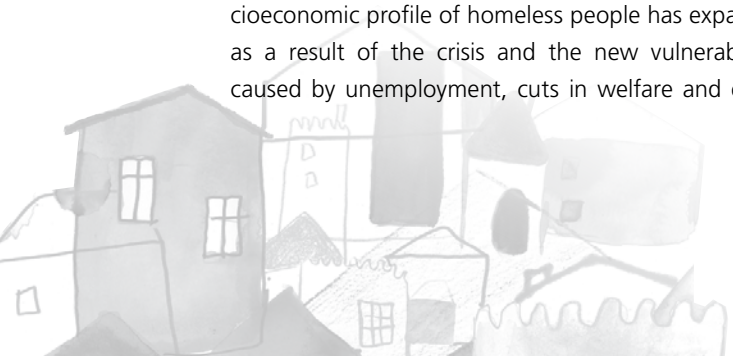
Chapter 2.1.1 focuses on the extent of homelessness in the 21 Member States covered by the report. Although the data in many contexts is inadequate to provide a detailed picture, it seems that homelessness has increased in the past 1-5 years in 15 Member States. In some instances, this increase is closely linked to the financial and economic crisis. However, rising homelessness also reflects longer-standing structural problems, as well as a lack of effective policy for tackling homelessness. Homelessness has decreased in the Netherlands, Finland and Scotland as a result of integrated homelessness strategies. In some countries, such as Ireland, the impact of the crisis on levels of homelessness has been limited by such integrated strategies.

Chapter 2.1.2 focuses on the changing profile of the homeless population in Europe. The majority of homeless people in Europe appear to be white, middle aged and male. Nonetheless, the profile of homelessness is changing in many Member States. This includes an increasing proportion of homeless women, families, migrants and young people. In some countries, the socioeconomic profile of homeless people has expanded as a result of the crisis and the new vulnerabilities caused by unemployment, cuts in welfare and exposure to the collapse of housing bubbles. Changes in the profile of homeless people require responsive homelessness policies and this has important implications for homelessness strategies.

Section 2.2 focuses on the evolution of homeless policies and the level of ambition to reduce homelessness in different Member States.

Firstly, chapter 2.2.1 explores the extent to which integrated homelessness strategies have been developed in Europe. Integrated homeless strategies aim to gradually reduce and ultimately end homelessness over the medium to long term. There is a growing consensus that such strategies are required to make meaningful progress on homelessness. Key elements for successful integrated homelessness strategies include medium to long term strategic objectives and operational targets; a multi-dimensional approach including inter-ministerial and cross-sector working; a sustainable approach with regular review of policy in terms of progress and evolutions in homelessness; political commitment; and adequate funding. Forms of integrated homelessness strategies have been developed in 10 European countries at national or regional level. Those countries that do not have integrated homelessness strategies can be divided into two groups: those where there is a well-established homeless service system but a lack of longer term strategic planning for the gradual reduction of homelessness; and those where the homeless service system is in a period of development. Encouragingly, many countries that do not have a strategy in place are making progress towards implementing one. The European Union has an important role to play in supporting Member States to develop and implement such strategies.

Chapter 2.2.2 analyses the extent to which homeless policies in the EU are evidence-based. In order to make meaningful progress on homelessness, policy development needs to be evidence-based. This involves linking research and policy to enhance knowledge and understanding; having a clear definition of data manage-



ment responsibility; having a clear definition of homelessness for the purpose of collecting data; developing a clear link between strategic goals and data collection strategies; and having adequate data collection tools in operation. There is considerable variation in the extent to which homeless policies are evidence-based in Europe. Some countries have strong data collection systems that play a clear role in strategic planning and monitoring. Other countries have some data but this is insufficient for the purposes of strategic planning to end homelessness. Most countries have made progress on homeless data collection in recent years. There is also a well developed body of knowledge at EU level about the type of data required and how this can be collected.

Chapter 2.2.3 analyses the extent to which two key areas of homelessness policy are developed in Europe: housing-led approaches and targeted prevention. Overall, homeless policies are becoming more comprehensive, meaning that they increasingly go beyond meeting the most basic needs of homeless people and involve preventing homelessness and re-housing homeless people as quickly as possible with appropriate support. Housing-led approaches and targeted prevention have emerged as key priorities in making sustained progress on homelessness. These reflect a broader shift towards the "normalization" of the living conditions of people experiencing homelessness. This shift breaks with the dominant policy and service paradigm in Europe, which has been orientated around supporting homeless people within a separate "homeless system" until such a time as they are ready or able to be integrated into society. There is growing evidence in European and internationally that housing-led approaches are an effective way to combat homelessness. Some countries such as Finland, Denmark, and Scotland have developed housing-led homelessness strategies where immediate access to housing with support as necessary is becoming the dominant mode of service delivery. Other countries such as France and Portugal have adopted a housing-led strategy in principal but are in pre-operational phase of implementation. In yet other countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, various forms of supported housing services are well established although the transitional approach to homeless service delivery remains central for at least some groups of homeless people. In other contexts, housing-led approaches are not widespread, although there may be some local initiatives. Targeted prevention measures are developed to diverse extents in different Member States. These tend to focus on prevention of evictions and discharge from institutions. In some Member States, prevention is one of the main forms of homeless service delivery where as it is underdeveloped in others.

Chapter 2.2.4 discusses the quality of homeless services in Europe. Analysis of staffing levels and room occupancy in residential homeless services shows that there is great diversity in the quality of homeless services. Conditions range from overcrowded dormitories to single rooms in shelter and hostel accommodation. The extent to which homeless people receive individual care from qualified social workers also varies considerably. Policies orientated towards ending homelessness increasingly require quality frameworks which support ending situations of homelessness rather than managing homelessness. This requires the development of innovative outcome measurement tools. There are several examples of useful approaches that have been developed in Europe.

Chapter 2.2.5 looks at the extent to which coercive policies are used to address homelessness in Europe's Member States. In a number of contexts, measures have been introduced to criminalize homeless people or to use enforcement measures to control their use of public space. This often reflects a failure of homeless policy to offer decent alternatives to homelessness. Even when there are well developed homeless services that can facilitate genuine exits from homelessness, coercive approaches represent a high risk strategy and can have negative outcomes for homeless people.

**Part 3** of the report presents conclusions and policy recommendations to improve progress on homelessness within the EU. Specific recommendations are presented regarding how the European Union can best continue to support and coordinate the development of effective homeless policies in the EU's Member States.

# 1. Introduction

### *Scope of the Report*

This report examines homelessness and homeless policies in the European Union (EU) Member States. It provides a European-level evaluation of how homelessness is evolving in Europe. Furthermore, it examines how ambitious Member States are in terms of ending homelessness and how this political ambition is translated into policy frameworks. The report's analysis is from the perspective of non-profit homeless service providers. The extent and evolution of homelessness in different national contexts is examined, as well as the nature and structure of the policies in place to address homelessness in these contexts.



The report is not a comparative analysis of homelessness levels in the EU Member States, nor is it able to provide aggregated statistics on the extent of homelessness in the EU. Such reporting is not possible on the basis of existing data. The main focus of the report is on which policy frameworks Member States are using to tackle homelessness and how these can be improved. Whilst the effectiveness of the actual policies is addressed to some extent, it is beyond the scope of the report to provide a detailed evaluation of each country's policy.

This is a first attempt to report on the evolution of homeless policies from a European perspective. In developing this report, FEANTSA seeks to contribute to strengthening the monitoring and reporting on homelessness at EU level. It is hoped that this report can be built upon in the future to enhance EU-level policy coordination and support in the area of homelessness for the 2014-2020 period. To this end, the report provides an example of how monitoring and reporting on Member States' homelessness policies can be carried out. In addition, it draws out some priorities for future support and coordination of Member States' homeless policies.

In addition to this European synthesis report, country fiches providing a summary of homelessness and homeless policies for each Member State are available from www.feantsa.org

### *EU Policy Context*

Homelessness is one of the thematic priorities to have emerged from the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the framework of the EU's anti-poverty strategy. The Social Affairs ministers of the Member States called for concerted EU action on homelessness in March 2010 with the adoption of the Joint Report on Social Protection and Inclusion.[1] The Joint Report emphasised the need for integrated national strategies to tackle homelessness, and put forward some of the key elements that these strategies should contain.

Since 2010, the Europe 2020 Strategy, with its target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty, has revised the anti-poverty policy context at EU level. Homelessness remains a key priority in this framework. One of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy is the European Platform against Poverty (EPAP). In defining the scope of the EPAP, the Commission has identified homelessness as "one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, which has increased in recent years".[2] The list of key initiatives that the Commission committed to implementing in this new framework contains a number of examples of specific action on homelessness, including a commitment to "identify methods and means to best continue the work initiated on homelessness and housing exclusion, taking into account the outcome of the consensus conference of December 2010".[3]

Six Peer Reviews of Member States' policies in the homeless area have been organised under the Social OMC:

2004: The Rough Sleeping Strategy, England, UK
2005: Preventing and Tackling Homelessness, Denmark
2006: The National Strategy Pathway to a Permanent Home, Norway
2009: Counting the Homeless – Improving the Basis for Planning Assistance, Austria
2010: Building a Comprehensive and Participative Strategy on Homelessness, Portugal
2010: The Finnish National Programme to Reduce Long-term Homelessness, Finland

1 6500/10
2 COM/2010/0758 final
3 SEC(2010) 1564 final

These have provided valuable policy evaluation and mutual learning on the basis of critical analysis. They have also demonstrated the interest and demand for shared policy analysis and progress at European level in the area of homelessness. In addition, FEANTSA, as a European network dedicated to homelessness, has facilitated a range of transnational exchange- and mutual-learning activities. There is, as a result, a community of practitioners and policymakers engaged in a productive European dynamic on homeless policies in the framework of the EU's anti-poverty strategy.

The European Consensus Conference on Homelessness was an official event of the 2010 Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. On the basis of expert evidence, an independent jury drew conclusions on six key questions concerning homeless policies. Their recommendations provided a basis for moving towards a more strategic approach to homelessness policies at EU-level.

The European Parliament drew upon the jury's recommendations on the 14th September 2011 when it adopted a Resolution calling for an integrated EU homelessness strategy to monitor, support and coordinate the development of national homelessness strategies.[4] Both the Committee of the Regions[5] and the European Economic and Social Committee[6] have published own-initiative opinions on homelessness and have called for a reinforced EU-level framework to coordinate and support Member States in developing and implementing effective strategies to tackle the problem.

In 2012, the Social Protection Committee's Work Programme committed it to working on the "tackling of homelessness and housing exclusion" by considering "how the OMC can best contribute to a step-up in the attention given to this issue".[7]

Furthermore, homelessness is a particularly pertinent issue in the context of the current economic and financial crisis.[8] The 2012 Annual Growth Survey confirms that homelessness has increased in some Member States as a result of the crisis[9]. Member States such as Greece and Spain are experiencing rapid increases. The EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review of June 2012 reported that homelessness has gained ground across the EU as a result of job loss and falling incomes, particularly in Member States on the EU's periphery. The review highlights that even in the context of recession and the collapse of housing bubbles, those Member States with effective homelessness policies have managed to avoid more significant increases.

The importance of homelessness as a social policy challenge is well reflected by the National Reform Programmes (NRPs). These programmes outline Member States' commitments to deliver on the Europe 2020 strategy and its targets in relation to 10 guidelines on economic and employment policies.[10] More than half of the national governments of the EU have included targeted measures on homelessness within their NRP. These countries include Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.[11]

In March 2012, under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU, the 11th annual meeting of People Experiencing Poverty focused on homelessness and housing rights in the context of the crisis. The event brought together over 150 delegates (people with direct experience of poverty and/or homelessness) from 30 countries to contribute actively to EU policy processes linked to homelessness. The meeting's key messages concluded both that "the complexity of homelessness and housing exclusion requires integrated solutions" and that "there is need for further development of integrated housing and homelessness strategies at local, regional, national and EU levels".[12]

In July 2012, the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council adopted conclusions on "Responding to demographic challenges through enhanced participation in the labour market and society by all". The Council called on Member States and the European Commission to "develop and promote adequate schemes for persons who are homeless".[13]

4 B7-0475/2011
5 2011/C 15/08
6 2012/C 24/07
7 SPC/2011.12/8
8 H. Frazer and E. Marlier (2011), *Social Impact of the Crisis and developments in the light of fiscal consolidation measures*, CEPS/INSTEAD
9 COM(2011) 815 final
10 SEC(2010) 488 final
11 FEANTSA (2012) *National Reform Programmes 201 2 and the Europe2020 poverty target: Investment in homelessness reduction emerging as a priority in the Europe2020 growth strategy,* Brussels
12 11373/12
13 Council conclusions *"Responding to demographic challenges through enhanced participation in the labour market and society by all"* , 3177th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 21st June 2012

The policy context presented above demonstrates that two factors are driving homelessness on the EU policy agenda. Firstly, homelessness is increasing in a number of countries as a result of the crisis. Secondly, a European dynamic has developed around homelessness policies with demand for ongoing and enhanced exchange, coordination and support.

In order to respond, the different EU instruments available for addressing homelessness – the Structural Funds, the Open Method of Coordination, the European Platform against Poverty, – need to be mobilised in an integrated framework that can deliver enhanced policy coordination and support for Member States. Such a framework will need to build on existing evidence about effective policies to make progress on homelessness. In addition, it will need to develop mechanisms for monitoring progress. This report seeks to inform reflection about developing such an EU framework.

### *The Rise of Homeless Strategies in Europe*

Over the past twenty years, there has been a growth in the development of specific strategies on homelessness at national and regional level. These strategies provide an integrated medium to long-term framework for the implementation of homeless policies and are generally characterised by the following: definition of quantitative and/or qualitative objectives; an integrated approach to tackling homelessness as a complex and dynamic process; governance mechanisms defining the respective roles of different actors and stakeholders; the allocation of financial resources and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

One of the driving forces for the growth of strategies has been the growing understanding of the social, economic and personal costs of homelessness. In some cases, this has fuelled ambition in terms of gradually reducing and ultimately ending different forms of homelessness rather than simply managing the problem.[14] To date, nine European countries have developed integrated strategies to tackling homelessness. The need for such strategies has been underlined in a number of key EU-level policy documents including the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2010, the European Parliament's Resolution on an EU homelessness strategy, the outcomes of the European Consensus Conference and the EPSCO conclusions on Responding to Demographic Challenges through Enhanced Participation in the Labour Market and Society by All.[15] It has also been underlined by the independent experts on social inclusion in the framework of the Social OMC.[16] One of the main purposes of this report is to measure the extent to which integrated strategies are being implemented and to report on the extent to which they contribute to improved progress on homelessness.

### *Methodology*

This report was drafted mostly on the basis of input from national experts who are members of FEANTSA's Administrative Council. The data collection and analysis took place between February and October 2012. National contributions in the form of responses to a questionnaire were received from FEANTSA members in 21 of the Member States of the EU.[17] In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Malta and Slovakia the homeless sector, and thus FEANTSA's membership, is inadequately structured to allow representative input. Some input was also received from Norway.

The semi-standardised questionnaire (see annex 3) consisted of open questions. As well as completing and returning the questionnaire, national experts also submitted annexed documents including studies, legal texts and policy documents in order to illustrate the situation in their national context. National input was further complimented by desk research carried out by the FEANTSA secretariat using secondary sources including national and European policy literature. These inputs were analysed in relation to two main research questions:

1. What is the extent of homelessness and how is the homeless population evolving over time?
2. Is there an ambitious policy framework that seeks to progressively reduce homelessness?

14 FEANTSA (2010) *Ending Homelessness: A Handbook for Policy Makers,* Brussels

15 Council conclusions *Responding to demographic challenges through enhanced participation in the labour market and society by all* , 3177th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 21 June 2012

16 Hugh Frazer and Eric Marlier (2009) *Homelessness and housing exclusion across EU Member States: Analysis and suggestions on the way forward by the EU Network of independent experts on social inclusion*, Social Inclusion Policy and Practice, CEPS/INSTEAD, 15th December 2009

17 Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK

The first research question sought to identify as clearly as possible the extent of homelessness in different Member States and the key evolutions in terms of increases/decreases and changes in the composition of the homeless population. The aim was to provide a solid context for understanding the nature and adequacy of policy frameworks and to identify emerging challenges.

The second research question sought to explore the extent to which homelessness is being addressed within an ambitious policy framework that actually seeks to reduce and ultimately end it (rather than provide simply curative responses). In order to answer this second question, five main factors were taken into account:

i. the extent to which homeless policy is underpinned by an **integrated strategy** at national or regional level;
ii. the extent to which the policy is **evidence-based**;
iii. the extent to which the policy is **comprehensive** and includes:
    a. Provision of targeted prevention
    b. Integration of housing-led approaches;
iii. the **quality of homeless services**
iv. the extent to which **coercive measures** are used to respond to homelessness

These factors were identified on the basis of existing evidence about which elements effective homelessness strategies should contain. They were identified in the 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. They were also reflected in the conclusions of the jury of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness and are supported by a growing body of evidence in Europe and internationally about how to make progress on homelessness. The decision to focus on these five factors can be justified as follows:

- **An integrated strategy** refers to a policy framework at national/regional level to facilitate the gradual reduction of homelessness over time. Such a framework should be sustainable in terms of the adequacy of funding and level of political commitment; involve a governance structure that allows all relevant stakeholders to participate and include long-term objectives.

- **An evidence-based approach** refers to having strategies for data collection in order for policy to be based on a detailed understanding of the extent and nature of the problem. It involves setting targets and monitoring progress towards concrete objectives and linking policy development to research to facilitate sound knowledge and understanding of the issue.

- In order to be **comprehensive**, homeless policies must cover the full spectrum of needs of homeless people by delivering prevention, emergency services and temporary accommodation, as well as long-term housing solutions. All homeless policies deliver some degree of emergency and temporary accommodation, even though this may be inadequate. The provision of emergency accommodation is not indicative of an ambition to find long-term solutions to homelessness. In this context, two additional areas of homeless policy emerge as particularly important:
    - **Provision of targeted prevention**
    - **Integration of housing-led approaches.**

  Whilst the provision of emergency and short-term accommodation is an essential element of homelessness policies, those homeless policies that seek to reduce and gradually eliminate homelessness must go beyond this to include prevention and permanent housing solutions.

- How the **quality of homeless services** is monitored and promoted is a useful indicator of the extent to which policy is coordinated and supported by a national/regional framework.

- The use of **coercive measures** to combat homelessness has increased in some European contexts in recent years and this is a worrying development that suggests some public authorities are failing to develop effective solutions.

On the basis of the research questions, the data from the questionnaire and secondary sources was analysed and written up as a European synthesis report. A number of conclusions and policy recommendations were then developed.

### *Limits of the Methodology*

The methodology used for this report has a number of limitations. The first concerns the scope of the data collection. Only 21 EU Member States were covered by the national inputs. This reflects the limits of FEANTSA's membership. Where possible, attempts have been made to integrate information from other countries from alternative sources.

Of course, the level of detail of the information that could be collected and analysed from each country was also limited. Homelessness and homeless policies vary between regions and municipalities. National experts had to encapsulate complex and varied patterns as accurately as possible in order to provide a synthetic overview. It was simply not possible to focus on all aspects of policies in the different countries, so pragmatic choices had to be made in responding to the questionnaire and in writing up the final analysis.

National experts had access to data of varying quality and detail. Broadly speaking, countries in Western and Northern Europe have a longer-standing policy focus on homelessness, which has led to more thorough statistical data collection, the production of political strategies and documents, as well as more extensive research and an academic focus on homelessness. The national experts in these contexts were therefore able to draw on relatively rich data and information. In contrast, countries in the South of Europe tend to have less comprehensive data and research, reflecting the fact that homelessness is less established as a strategic priority. In Central and Eastern Europe, policies and services are generally more restricted and the data and research available more limited.

Similarly, the data and information available (linked to the level of strategic priority and service provision) varies considerably within Member States. Certain regions (often the most populous) have more extensive policy responses to homelessness and better data and information available than others. Major cities often have specific policy contexts which mean more data and policy information is available. The political level of competence for homelessness policy varies between Member States. In those countries with highly regionalised or localised structures, it was more of a challenge to reflect the national-level situation. Although the basic unit of data collection was Member States, the analysis presented in the final report sometimes focuses on sub-national policy frameworks in order to convey the reality of homeless policies and available data.

The report was based on input from national experts. This means that it is based on subjective reading of the national situation by the national experts who are members of FEANTSA's board. It is important to note that the questionnaire was filled in by national experts in their capacity as voluntary board members. The amount of time and the support available to them was limited and this contributed to considerable variation in the level of detail and the thoroughness of the national reporting.

### *Quality of Homelessness Data Available in the EU*

Overall, the available data on homelessness in the EU is limited. Relatively few national governments monitor and measure homelessness in a systematic way, although considerable progress is ongoing, with more countries developing national homelessness data collection systems. However, even when data is collected, it is not comparable at EU level. One of the major challenges in designing and carrying out this monitoring report has been the lack of comparable quantitative and qualitative data on homelessness across countries within the EU. Whilst progress is being made to improve this situation, it remains a major constraint.

Previous research has noted inadequate data on homelessness across much of the EU. Even those countries with the most extensive homeless policies and services lack truly comprehensive data. Pleace *et al.* have identified three groups in terms of the quality of data available on homelessness:[18]

- Generally quite weak data on homelessness, though some information at the level of municipalities or individual cities (often on people living rough and in shelters)
- Some data on homelessness but with significant gaps in information
- Relatively extensive data on homelessness, but not covering all groups of homeless people, or all regions of the country

Homeless people are generally not captured by household surveys and have been poorly addressed by national censuses. The 2011 round of population and housing censuses provided an opportunity for the enumeration of homeless people because the EC produced guidance on including homeless people. Preliminary analysis suggests that the quality of efforts to enumerate homeless people through the census varied considerably. The limited EU level guid-

18 Nicholas Pleace, Nora Teller and Deborah Quilgars (2011) *Social Housing Allocation and Homelessness on Homelessness* EOH Comparative Studies, FEANTSA, Brussels



ance on how to define, enumerate or estimate homelessness was only implemented by a small number of countries and appears to have not been referred to by the Census offices of many. At the time of writing, most of the countries that did use the census to enumerate homelessness have not yet published data. Overall, the ambition of a 2011 Census-based EU-wide figure for homelessness seems unlikely to be realised.

Limitations of data on homelessness include the fact that much data collection is focused on enumeration and covers rather limited information on personal characteristics (age, nationality etc). Key information for analysis and interpretation is often missing, such as information on the period of homelessness. At EU level and even at national level in many instances, data collection is not based on common counting methods or definitions, which severely limits comparability between countries or over time. Relatively few countries collect data on homelessness on a regular or ongoing basis. This means that data can be very out of date.

There are nonetheless a variety of sources of data available and much progress has been made on homelessness data collection in recent years. At EU level, a number of projects have been implemented to support progress. A European study on measuring homelessness, commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion reviewed methods of data collection on homelessness in Europe.[19] The report sets out a methodology for developing a homeless monitoring information system and makes a number of recommendations to the European Commission and to national governments. The MPHASIS Project (2007–2009) focused on improving capacity for monitoring information on homelessness and housing exclusion in 20 European countries on the basis of the recommendations from the previous study.[20]

### *Definition of Homelessness: The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion*

The reference definition of homelessness used for the data collection and analysis in this report is the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, known as ETHOS (see table 1.2 below).[21] ETHOS was launched by FEANTSA in 2005 with the aim of promoting shared understanding on homelessness and providing a common framework definition of homelessness across the EU. It provides a 'common language' on homelessness in order to facilitate EU-level exchange, mutual learning, debate and comparison. The European Consensus Conference on Homelessness[22] concluded that ETHOS should be adopted across the EU:

> 'The jury confronts "common sense" definitions of homelessness as rough sleeping and concludes that homelessness is a complex, dynamic and differentiated process with different routes and exits, or "pathways", for different individuals and groups. The jury recommends the adoption of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS), which was launched by FEANTSA in 2005 as a common framework definition of homelessness'.

The ETHOS model is based around a conceptualisation of the notion of home that incorporates physical, social and legal domains of adequate, safe and secure housing. Homelessness and housing exclusion are conceptualised in terms of a deficiency within one or more of the following domains:

- Physical i.e. a lack of housing or adequate housing.
- Legal i.e. restricted rights or no rights to remain in accommodation.
- Social i.e. accommodation or a living situation that impairs quality of life because it offers insufficient privacy, physical security or space for social relations within a household

There are four main living situations within the ETHOS typology: rooflessness; houselessness, living in insecure housing and living in inadequate housing. Table 1.1 illustrates these theoretical domains of homelessness and housing exclusion in terms of the legal, physical and social domains of a home.

19 Bill Edgar, Matt Harrison, Peter Watson and Volker Busch-Geertsema (2007) *Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level,* European Communities, Brussels
20 See: http://www.trp.dundee.ac.uk/research/mphasis/
21 FEANTSA (2005) *ETHOS - European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion*
22 *European Consensus Conference on Homelessness: Policy Recommendations of the Jury (2010)*

**Table 1.1:** The theoretical domains of homelessness in ETHOS

| Conceptual category | Operational category | | Physical domain | Legal domain | Social domain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homelessness | ***1*** | **Rooflessness** | No dwelling (roof) | No legal title to a space for exclusive possession | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| | **2** | **Houselessness** | Has a place to live, fit for habitation | No legal title to a space for exclusive possession | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| Housing exclusion | **3** | **Insecure and inadequate housing** | Has a place to live (not secure and unfit for habitation) | No security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | **4** | **Inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling** | Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation) | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | No private and safe personal space for social relations |
| | **5** | **Inadequate housing (secure tenure)** | Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation) | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | **6** | **Insecure housing (adequate housing)** | Has a place to live | No security of tenure | Has space for social relations |
| | **7** | **Social isolation within a secure and adequate context** | Has a place to live | Has legal title and/or security of tenure | No private and safe personal space for social relations |



According to ETHOS, homelessness, (where a household's living situation is *unacceptable* under at least *two* of the physical, legal and social domains, is defined as being in either a 'roofless' or 'houseless' situation (Categories 1.1 through to 7.2, Table 1.2).

Of course, whether or not the living situations described in these operational categories are considered as homelessness varies between and within countries, as does the availability of data on the different categories. All national experts contributing to this report were invited to report on categories 1.1 to 3.1. However, respondents were also invited to provide information on additional categories of the ETHOS typology where possible.

**Table 1.2: European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)**

| Situation | Conceptual category | Operational category | | | Living situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homeless | Roofless | 1 | People living rough | 1.1 | Public space or external space |
| | | 2 | People staying in a night shelter | 2.1 | Night shelter |
| | Houseless | 3 | People in accommodation for the homeless | 3.1<br>3.2<br>3.3 | Homeless hostel<br>Temporary accommodation<br>Transitional supported accommodation |
| | | 4 | People in women's shelters | 4.1 | Women's shelter accommodation |
| | | 5 | People in accommodation for immigrants | 5.1<br>5.2 | Temporary accommodation or reception centre<br>Migrant workers' accommodation |
| | | 6 | People due to be released from institutions | 6.1<br>6.2<br>6.3 | Penal institution<br>Medical institution<br>Children's institution or home |
| | | 7 | People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness) | 7.1<br>7.2 | Residential care for older homeless people<br>Supported accommodation for formerly homeless persons |
| Housing Exclusion | Insecure | 8 | People living in insecure accommodation | 8.1<br>8.2<br>8.3 | Temporarily with family or friends<br>No legal (sub)tenancy<br>Illegal occupation of land |
| | | 9 | People living under threat of eviction | 9.1<br>9.2 | Legal orders enforced (rented)<br>Repossession orders (owned) |
| | | 10 | People living under threat of violence | 10.1 | Police-recorded incidents |
| | Inadequate | 11 | People living in temporary or non-conventional structures | 11.1<br>11.2<br>11.3 | Mobile home<br>Non-conventional building<br>Temporary structure |
| | | 12 | People living in unfit housing | 12.1 | Occupied dwelling unfit for habitation |
| | | 13 | People living in extreme overcrowding | 13.1 | Highest national norm of overcrowding |

### *Definitions Used at National and Sub-National Level*

The definitions of homelessness used by the national experts varied. This reflects both differences in national/regional definitions and the fact that more than one definition is often used within individual countries. For example, the definition used by the national statistics institute is sometimes different to those used by homeless policymakers and service providers. In some countries, different regions, municipalities and NGOs use different definitions of homelessness, particularly in the absence of an overarching framework definition developed to support national/regional policies.

Operational and policy definitions used in the Member States do not tend to match ETHOS precisely. In some countries, such as Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden, definitions of homelessness match ETHOS very closely. In other contexts, ETHOS categories are much less reflected in the definitions used.

National experts managed complexities around definition pragmatically. They used ETHOS as a reference and focused on how homelessness was *generally* defined in their countries. The open format of the questionnaire allowed national experts to respond to questions with sufficient contextual information to clarify what was meant by "homelessness"

in different contexts and which particular living situations were being referred to. In almost all national contexts people living rough and in emergency accommodation are defined as homeless. This encompasses the two 'roofless' categories defined by ETHOS (1.1 and 2.1). Similarly, people living in accommodation for homeless people such as homeless hostels, temporary accommodation and transitional supported accommodation (3.1 – 3.3.) tend to be considered homeless. For this reason, all national experts were asked to report on rooflessness and houselessness in the first instance and were then given the opportunity to report on additional ETHOS categories.



# 2. Analysys

## 2.1 Part 1: Main Trends in Homelessness (Extent and Profiles)

The aim of this section is to give an overview of recent trends in homelessness in the EU. The section focuses on two main areas in the 21 Member States covered by this report:

- Trends in the extent of homelessness over the past 1-5 years
- Trends in the changing profile of the homeless population

### *2.1.1 Overview of Trends in the Extent of Homelessness Over the Past 1-5 Years*

National experts were asked to report on trends in homelessness over the past 1-5 years. Most countries are able to draw on some data covering at least people living rough and in emergency shelters, as well as people living in accommodation for homeless people (ETHOS operational categories 1-3). Even where data was relatively weak, most national experts were able to give indications of trends on the basis of available information about whether levels of homelessness have fallen, risen or remained stable in the past (up to five) years.

The precise time period covered by the national respondents varied. This is because the information that was available to describe trends varied. Some data is more up-to-date and this has an impact on the accuracy of the trends described. The analysis here focuses on providing a snapshot of trends according to the data and information available.

The basic unit of analysis for exploring these trends is the Member State. Nonetheless, when clear evidence was provided that distinguished special cases within a Member State, this has been taken into account. Such evidence is presented due to decentralised governance and data collection arrangements. In the case of the UK, there was a difference in trends between Scotland and the other three devolved governments. In the case of Germany data available for North Rhine-Westphalia contrasted with the national picture. For Belgium, the evidence provided focused mainly on Brussels and Flanders. No information was collected for Wallonia. Other countries where there is a high level of decentralisation such as Spain were able to report on overall national trends despite regionalised governance and data. Of course, overall trends reported at national level conceal variation within all countries. There are situations, for example, where homelessness declined in some areas where the overall national trend is that of an increase (or vice versa).

**Table 2.1 Overview of Trends in the Extent of Homelessness (Past 1 – 5 Years)**

| Trend Reported | Member State | Total |
|---|---|---|
| Increase in homelessness over past 1-5 years | Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK (England, Northern Ireland, Wales) | 15 Member States |
| Reduction in homelessness over past 1-5 years | Finland, Netherlands<br><br>*Plus German Länder North Rhine-Westphalia and UK country Scotland.* | 2 Member States<br><br>*Plus 2 specific cases within Member States* |
| No trend identified | Romania, Luxembourg, Belgium | 3 Member States |
| Stable levels of homelessness past 1-5 years | Denmark | 1 Member State |
| **Total Member States** | | **21** |

Homelessness remains a reality in all Member States. According to the information provided by national experts, homelessness has risen in the past 1-5 years in 15 of the 21 Member States surveyed. 3 Member States were unable to identify an overall trend in the extent of homelessness due to lack of data. 2 Member States reported decreasing levels of homelessness over the past 1–5 years. 2 additional cases within Member States were identified where homelessness had decreased – the German Länder of North Rhine-Westphalia and the UK country Scotland. Only 1 Member State reported a stable level of homelessness. Of course, homelessness levels captured by data collection fluctuate on an annual basis and there is an element of subjectivity in defining trends. Nonetheless, FEANTSA members are well placed to evaluate the evolution of homelessness in their national contexts. The following section describes and analyses this evolution in more detail by looking at three groups of countries:

- Group 1: Increase in homelessness over past 1-5 years
- Group 2: Reduction in homelessness over past 1-5 years
- Group 3: Stable levels of homelessness over past 1-5 years
- Group 4: Overall trend unclear

### *Group 1: Increase in Homelessness Over Past 1 – 5 Years*

As demonstrated by table 2.1 above, there is a general trend of increasing homelessness in much of the EU. This is reflected in the perceptions of European citizens. In 2010, three out of four people in the EU thought that homelessness had increased in their country over the previous three years.[23] This perception was particularly strong in the Central and Eastern European Member States as well as in Spain and in Greece. At EU level, rising levels of homelessness are described as one of the major impacts of the current financial and economic crisis.[24]

Table 2.2 below presents the 15 countries that have reported increasing homelessness and the extent to which increases were attributed by national experts to the context of the crisis. Much analysis concentrates on the importance of the crisis in explaining growing levels of homelessness. Whilst this is a reality in some countries, the table reveals that rising levels in other contexts are not clearly related to the crisis.

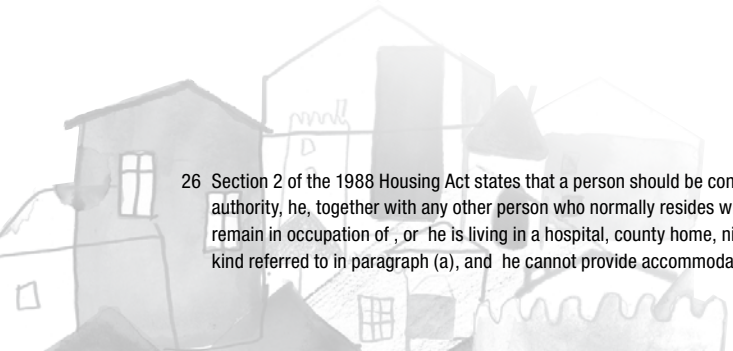
23 Special Eurobarometer on Poverty and Social Exclusion no. 355 (wave 74.1) 2010, question 30.2.
24 *EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review*, June 2012.

**Table 2.2 Member States where Increase in Homelessness Reported in the Past 1-5 years**

| Country | Evidence for increasing homelessness | Impact of the financial and economic crisis |
|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | Whilst there is a lack of national data in Austria, local-level evidence suggests that homelessness is increasing in a number of cities. The Vienna Social Welfare Report shows that the number of users of homeless services has increased year-on-year between 2000 and 2009. 7,526 clients used homeless services in 2009, an increase from the total of 6,599 in 2008. It is however important to note that these figures reveal more about the evolution of the services on offer as they do about the number of homeless people. There have also been newspaper reports of inadequate levels of shelter to cope with increased demand in Vienna. An annual survey of service providers in Salzburg provides data for the last 15 years and shows a steady increase in homelessness over this period, with the 2011 survey estimating that there are approximately 1000 homeless people in Salzburg and the surrounding area. This upward trend is clearly not uniform, as in Lower Austria the number of people using services for homeless people remained fairly stable between 2007 and 2010. | The national expert attributed the rise in homelessness in Vienna largely to the increase in the number of EU citizens from new member states facing homelessness in the city in recent years. In Salzburg, increasing housing costs and a lack of affordable housing were the main cause. The financial crisis was not considered an important factor. |
| **Czech Republic** | Despite a lack of robust statistical evidence at national level, an increase in homelessness is reported on the basis of data and observations from service providers. For example, according to the national register of social services, the number of users of day centres has increased by 10% in the 2009-2010 period. The overall level of service provision has expanded over recent years. | It is unclear to what extent ongoing increase is affected by the crisis. The main reason for the increase cited by the national expert is the lack of strategic housing policy. |
| **France** | Service providers report increases in demand over the past 5 years. The *Samu Social* in Paris reported a 24% increase in requests for shelter via the 115[25] homelessness phone line during the winter period over a 5 year period. The *Secours Catholique* reports that in 2010, the total number of people using their services was 1,492,000 - an increase of 2.3% on 2009 levels. In 2009, the National 115 Observatory reported 3,736 requests for accommodation on one night in February, an increase of 22% compared with the same period in 2008. In its 2010 activity report, the Observatory of the *Samu Social de Paris* indicated that requests for accommodation in Paris rose by 21% compared to 2009. | There has been an ongoing increase that predates the crisis. It is not clear to what extent the rate of increase has intensified as a result of the crisis. Stakeholders report that vulnerability to homelessness has become more widespread and are concerned about the impact of budget freezes for many categories of homeless service. |
| **Germany** | The German umbrella of NGO homeless service providers (BAG W) estimates that the number of homeless people increased by 10% from 2008 (227,000) to 2010 (248,000), following a longer period of decrease. BAG W estimates an increase of approximately 10% in the number of rough sleepers from 20,000 to 22,000. It also reports that the number of people at risk of homelessness has risen by 3.3% from 103,000 in 2008 to 106,000 in 2010.<br><br>National-level data beyond estimates is not available. Data at regional level suggests low and declining rates of homelessness in some regions, namely North Rhine-Westphalia (see separate entry under table 2.3) | The reasons given for the increase by the national expert include a shortage of affordable housing (particularly in metropolitan areas), which is compounded by cuts in social housing funding. Poverty as a result of long-term unemployment and low-wage work are drivers of the increase, as are inadequate social security for unemployed people, inadequate housing support for young people and a reduction in employment promotion measures. An overall reversal of the previous downward trend in levels of homelessness is reported at national level. |
| **Greece** | Service providers estimate that Greece's homeless population rose by 25% between 2009 and 2011 and reached 20,000. | Rapid increase as a result of the crisis. Growing unemployment and falling income have increased vulnerability to homelessness as more people are unable to meet housing costs. Austerity measures and cuts have had a major impact on service capacity at a time of growing demand. |

25 115 is a telephone line dedicated to advice and referral to accommodation for homeless people in France.

| Country | Evidence for increasing homelessness | Impact of the financial and economic crisis |
|---|---|---|
| **Hungary** | Data on homelessness are collected through a non-comprehensive survey of services carried out by *Budapesti Módszertani Szociális Központ* every year on the 3rd of February. The number of people interviewed who were living in homeless hostels rose from 3,708 on the 3rd February 2008 to 6,302 on the same night in 2011. The number of rough sleepers identified decreased from 3,068 in 2010 to 2,870 in 2011. | There has been an ongoing increase that predates the crisis. It is not clear to what extent the rate of increase has intensified as a result of the crisis. The fall in rough sleeping can be partly explained by extremely cold winters and the introduction of specific temporary shelter programmes. It also reflects the application of coercive measures that have forced rough sleepers into shelters or into more hidden forms of homelessness. |
| **Ireland** | Lack of reliable data on homelessness. However, according to the official data collated by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government as part of the to the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), the number of homeless households[26] waiting for social housing was 1,394 in 2008 and climbed to 2,348 in 2011. Other categories recorded as part of the HNA include those living in unfit accommodation (1,708); overcrowded accommodation (4,594); involuntarily sharing (8,534); and not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation (65,643).<br><br>In September 2012, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland released 'Homeless Persons in Ireland – Special Census Report' which counted the number of people in homeless accommodation or sleeping rough on Census Night. A breakdown of the numbers in different accommodation types was given along with education attainment, economic status and general health of people who are homeless. 3,808 people were counted in accommodation providing shelter for people who are homeless or were identified as sleeping rough on Census Night. This is a minimum figure for a number of reasons. There was no self-identification question on homelessness on the Census form. In the methodology used persons were classified as being homeless on the basis of where they spent Census Night. Rough sleepers and squatters who were not known to services, Gardai and local authority staff, especially outside the Dublin region may not have been included. People staying with friends and relatives (sofa surfers) with no other options are not included. They would have appeared in private household census forms as a guest on the night in question.<br><br>The Dublin Region Homeless Executive reports a rise in rough sleeping since 2009. 87 persons were confirmed to be sleeping rough on the night of the most recent count on November 9th 2011, which is an increase on the overall trend of rough sleeping confirmed in counts that have taken place since November 2007. The number of people sleeping rough is compared to 70 persons during the same period in November 2010. The vast majority of those identified on the count were male (73) with 9 females and 5 people of unknown gender. When a person was awake it was possible to talk to them and ask their name, date of birth and nationality. Of those Of those who gave information about their nationality, 34 were Irish and 17 non-Irish. | There has been a reversal in the downward trend as a result of the crisis. However, the impact of the crisis on homelessness has been partly mitigated by an integrated strategy and well-developed services. Progress towards the goals of the national strategy (ending rough sleeping and long-term homelessness) has been partially blocked by lack of permanent housing for homeless people to move into. There is very little scope for investment to improve the move-on offer/options at present. |



26 Section 2 of the 1988 Housing Act states that a person should be considered to be homeless if there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of , or he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he cannot provide accommodation from his own resources.

| Country | Evidence for increasing homelessness | Impact of the financial and economic crisis |
|---|---|---|
| **Italy** | The national statistics institute, ISTAT, completed its first national survey of homelessness in 2012. The homeless population is estimated at 47,648 (including parts of ETHOS categories 1-3). As it is the first such report, trends over time are not described. Nonetheless, the national expert reported a general trend of increasing homelessness, supported by data from local and regional level. Based on data from 2009, the Commission for Research into Social Exclusion (*Commissione di Indagine sull'Esclusione Sociale - Cies*) has reported rising levels of homelessness and extreme poverty in Naples and Campania. The *Comunità di Sant Egidio* estimated that there were 1500 homeless people in Naples in 2009, an increase of 30% from 2008. An association giving legal advice to homeless people in Italy, *Avvocati di Strada*, has recorded an increase in the numbers of people requesting its help in 26 cities. In 2011, it ran 2,360 voluntary practices compared to 2,212 in 2010. The 2011 population census revealed a dramatic increase over the past ten years in the number of households who report living in shacks, caravans, tents or similar dwellings – from 23,336 in 2001 to 71,101 in 2011. The national expert reports that both the homeless population and the population at risk of homelessness have increased. | The effects of the economic and financial crisis seem to have contributed to an increase in the number of homeless people and the number of people at risk of homelessness. |
| **Lithuania** | The number of residents in shelters for the homeless increased from 1,952 in 2006 to 2,142 in 2010. | There has been an ongoing increase that predates the crisis. It is not clear to what extent it has intensified as a result of the crisis. The national expert points out that the structural problems of low income, high unemployment, and lack of affordable housing prices, predate the crisis. |
| **Poland** | According to Social Welfare Statistics, there has been steady growth in the number of homeless people in Poland from 33,785 in 2005 to 42,768 in 2010. This trend was slightly disturbed by the Polish accession to the EU in 2004, which resulted in a wave of emigration and related changes to the domestic labour market. | There has been an ongoing increase, which may to some extent have been intensified by the return of emigrants as a result of the crisis. |
| **Portugal** | Evidence of increasing homelessness. Service providers report increased demand for services. For example, AMI reports that the number of homeless people accessing their services increased from 1,448 in 2007 to 1,815 in 2011 - a rise of 25%. The percentage of new cases of homelessness in their services rose by 10%, from 634 in 2007 to 696 in 2011. | There has been an increase as a result of the crisis. Growing unemployment and income falls have increased vulnerability to homelessness as more people are unable to meet housing costs. Austerity measures and cuts impact on service capacity. Furthermore, the crisis has justified a lack of resources and high-level political backing for the '*National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People – Prevention, Intervention and Follow-Up, 2009-2015*' launched in 2009. |
| **Slovenia** | Despite a lack of reliable data, there are a number of indications that homelessness has increased since the mid-1990s. The number of services (night shelters, shelters, hostels) is increasing each year. Data collected by the Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs shows that the number of service users of food delivery and day/drop-in centres has increased from 721 users in 2007 to 1,307 users in 2009. | There has been an ongoing increase that predates the crisis. It is not clear what the impact of the crisis has been. |

| Country | Evidence for increasing homelessness | Impact of the financial and economic crisis |
|---|---|---|
| **Spain** | There are widespread reports of dramatic increases in homelessness since 2008. A survey by the National Statistics Agency in July 2012 showed a 15.7% increase in the number of users of homeless accommodation services.[27] In Barcelona 2,013 homeless people (ETHOS categories 1-3) were counted by a survey on a given night in 2008 and 2,791 by the same survey in 2011, an increase of 32.1 %. Whilst methodological changes contributed to this dramatic increase, it does reflect a widely acknowledged trend. | There has been a rapid increase in the context of the crisis. Growing unemployment and income falls have increased vulnerability to homelessness as more people are unable to meet housing costs. Austerity measures and cuts are having an impact on service capacity. |
| **Sweden** | The National Board of Health and Welfare surveys the homeless population every 5 years in the month of May.[28] The survey covers people in 4 situations: "acute" homelessness, institutional and longer term care, long-term housing on the secondary housing market and insecure housing. In 2011, overall homelessness had increased by almost by 50% since the last count in 2005. This reported increase is partly the result of a change in the definition that meant better account was taken of people in long-term housing solutions in the second survey. Nonetheless, the data shows increases in all 4 of the homeless situations measured. Although "acute homelessness" has increased, the number of rough sleepers has decreased. | There has been an ongoing increase. It is not clear to what extent the rate of increase has intensified as a result of the crisis. The fall in rough sleeping probably reflects the implementation of the 2007–2009 strategy which introduced a guarantee that everyone should have a roof over their head. |
| **UK (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)** | **England** Statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) show that the Autumn 2011 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England was 2,181. This is up 413 (23 per cent) from the Autumn 2010 total of 1,768. There had been a sustained reduction in statutory homelessness levels[29] from the early 2000s until 2009. This trend has now been reversed. DCLG statistics show that the financial year 2009/10 saw an increase in homelessness acceptances by local authorities of 10%, representing the first increase since the year 2003/04. During the 2011/12 financial year, there were 50,290 acceptances. This is an increase of 14 per cent from 44,160 in 2010/11. In line with a target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010, a downward trend began in 2004. However, the number of households in temporary accommodation has begun to rise again. On 31st March 2012, it was 50,430 - 5 per cent higher than the same date last year. This was the third consecutive quarterly increase. | There has been a reversal in the downward trend of rough sleeping and homeless households in temporary accommodation under statutory homeless legislation. This is widely considered by stakeholders to reflect the impact of the crisis and resultant cuts to local authority budgets, benefits and other areas. |
| | **Northern Ireland** Following an upward trend since 1999, the number of households presenting to local authorities as homeless peaked in 2006/07 at 21,013 households. From 2006/07 to 2009/10 the number levelled off, reaching 18,664 in 2009/10. There was however a sharp increase of 1,494 people from 18,664 in 2009/2010 to 20,158 in 2010/2011. | There had been an overall downward trend and but there has now been a sharp rise between 2010–2011 as a result of the crisis. |
| | **Wales** Both the number of homeless applications and acceptances under statutory homeless duty has risen slightly over the past year. This follows a general downward trend since 2004-2005. The number of households accepted as homeless had been generally falling since a peak during 2004-05 but has increased since 2009-2010. For 2011-12, acceptances continued to increase by 4 per cent to 6,515. However, they are still below the peak of 9,855 seen in 2004-05. As in England, the number of people in temporary accommodation fell between 2005-06 and 2009-10. However, it has begun to rise again. There were 310 households in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of March 2012, which is the highest level recorded since 2006-07 and is 31 per cent higher than in March 2011. Shelter Cymru have carried out a survey of organisations working with rough sleepers in which 11 out of 15 organisations reported an increase in demand for their services over the past 12 months. | Recent slight rises and the reversal in the downward trend are attributable to the impact of the crisis. |

27 Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011) *Encuesta sobre las Personas sin hogar – Centros Año 2010*, Press Release, 12th July 2011, available at http://www.ine.es/prensa/np667.pdf

28 National Board of Health and Welfare (2011) *Homelessness in Sweden 2011, available at http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2012/homelessnessinsweden2011*

29 Statutory homelessness statistics for England are collated and published each quarter by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Statutory homelessness is where local authorities have defined a household as homeless within the terms of the homelessness legislation. Where a household is found to be in priority need and not intentionally homeless, the local authorities has a duty to provide accommodation. This can include families with dependent children, pregnant women and adults who are assessed as vulnerable. The legal provisions are contained in the 1996 Housing Act, the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.

### *The Role of the Financial and Economic Crisis*

The economic downturn which started in 2008 has had some impact on the overall ***extent*** of homelessness.[30] For Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the UK, the crisis was identified as a key driver of increased homelessness in the past 5 years.

Several of the countries most affected by the crisis, such as Greece, Portugal and Spain have experienced dramatic increases in homelessness. Service providers in Portugal and Spain estimate increases of 25-30% in the demand for homeless services since the onset of the crisis. In Greece, despite a lack of reliable statistical data, there are clear indications of a large and rapid increase in homelessness. Service providers estimate that Greece's homeless population also rose by 25% between 2009 and 2011 and reached 20,000. Although the homeless population is concentrated in the major cities of Athens and Piraeus, smaller cities are seeing homelessness become a visible problem for the first time. These increases in homelessness reflect increased unemployment and loss of income which mean more people have difficulty meeting housing costs. At the same time, austerity budget cuts are diminishing capacity to respond to homelessness. For example, 61 of the 85 staff at the *City of Athens Homeless Foundation* were laid off in November 2010. A new shelter, begun in 2009 and intended to relieve congestion in the two existing hostels, has been unable to open because of the lack of staff. Housing benefit was suspended in 2010, partly due to the reduced inflow of social contributions which had funded the scheme. Social housing in the form of the Greek Workers' Housing Organisation has been abolished. Similar issues are observed in Spain and Portugal.

Homelessness in Ireland has increased due to the impact of the crisis and austerity measures imposed by international assistance. However, a well-established, integrated policy to reduce homelessness over the long term seems to have helped limit the impact of the crisis. Funding for homeless services has been maintained despite heavy austerity measures. Overall, political engagement with the objectives of *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013* seems to be ongoing. As a result service infrastructure has been maintained better than in Member States with more fragmented policy frameworks. Nonetheless, the impact of cuts in housing on homelessness is reported to be significant. The capital funding programme for social housing in Ireland has been seriously reduced over the past three years. A switch to a leasing-based housing programme has not produced sufficient units to meet the scale of demand for social housing. One of the key aims of the Irish homelessness strategy has been reducing the long-term use of temporary and emergency accommodation. The lack of capacity to provide move-on housing, compounded by the crisis, has been a major barrier in making progress towards this goal.



Cuts in welfare, housing, health, probation services, education and training are cited as aggravating homelessness by a number of national experts. In Ireland, changes were introduced to rent supplement payments in January 2012. The contribution individuals have to pay towards their rent has increased. This has stretched household incomes and increased vulnerability to homelessness. At the same time, rent limits have been revised downwards for each local authority, meaning that tenants receiving assistance either have to pay the difference between this and the actual price or look for accommodation that falls under new limits. There is concern that changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and housing benefit in the UK will contribute to rising homelessness. In the UK, changes include the reduction of all LHA rates (used to determine how much housing benefit a household in the private rental sector can receive in a given area); the introduction of a universal benefit cap; an increase in deductions for non-dependants sharing a home; a reduction in the rates for which claimants under 35 are eligible; and the introduction of a maximum of four bedrooms covered by housing benefit. The impact of these changes has led to particularly acute problems in high rent areas such as London. Media reports in April/May 2012 report London councils seeking temporary accommodation outside of the Capital for households to whom they owe a statutory housing duty. Previous homelessness strategies in England have led to impressive progress on reductions in both rough sleeping and the use of temporary accommodation. These downward trends are currently being reversed and numbers of both rough sleepers and people in temporary accommodation are increasing. In Spain, sweeping cuts at the level of local authorities are having a huge impact on social services.

There is some anecdotal evidence from service providers in Poland that there may be an intensification of a longer-standing increase in homelessness as a result of the crisis

30 The impact of the crisis on the ***changing profile*** of the homeless population is discussed in section 2.1.2

and specifically the return of emigrants whose prospects for employment in other countries have worsened. This is an important issue for the European level given the growing number of "reconnection" programmes in countries like the UK, Denmark and Ireland which seek to encourage homeless Central and Eastern Europeans to return to their countries of origin. Lithuania has specifically identified an increase in homelessness amongst individuals removed from other countries.

It is important to emphasise the difficulty in establishing a clear causal relationship between the crisis, austerity measures and resulting increases in homelessness. The trend of cutting public social spending and limiting the welfare state's contribution in most of the EU countries is a phenomenon predating the crisis which may have been reinforced by anti-crisis policies. Thus, whilst the changes to housing benefit in the UK described above have taken place in the context of cutting public spending to respond to the crisis, it is more difficult to argue that they are a direct result of the crisis. Similarly, the German umbrella of homeless service providers argues that it is the inadequacy of policies to promote access to affordable housing and to combat poverty that have led to increased homelessness in Germany, rather than a direct impact of the crisis.

For a number of countries, increasing homelessness is not primarily perceived to be a result of the crisis. Bearing in mind the difficulty in determining whether austerity measures result from the crisis or not, some national experts explain rises in homelessness over the past 1-5 years as part of a longer trend caused by structural factors and the lack of integrated policy approaches to address homelessness over the long term. In both the Czech Republic and Lithuania the main reason for ongoing increases in homelessness is explained by the national experts as a lack of strategic housing policy and a chronic shortage of affordable housing relative to need. This reflects the fact that Central and Eastern Europe Member States' formerly collective housing went through mass (and sometimes near total) privatisation after social and economic transition. This has created a highly residual and very small social housing sector, a poorly-regulated private sector and a lack of affordable housing. There may be some intensification of a longer-standing increase in homelessness levels but this is difficult to assess given the lack of data. Tightening of the housing market and shortages of accessible affordable housing in high demand areas also predate the crisis in numerous Member States.

For several Member States, the information available was simply not adequate to judge whether the crisis was a major factor in increasing overall levels of homelessness. In Hungary, Sweden, Slovenia and France, for example, there have been reported increases in homelessness over the past five years and longer but this is not explained by the national correspondent as primarily a result of the crisis. Often there has been a longstanding increase which may have been intensified by the crisis but reflects broader issues including the housing market and the strength of policy frameworks to deal with homelessness. In France, *Fondation Abbé Pierre* estimates that 10 million people are affected directly or indirectly by the ongoing housing crisis in France. Whilst this worsened in 2009 as a result of the recession, it is a problem that predates the crisis and is driven by broader trends in the housing market and by housing policies.

In some Member States, reported increases may also reflect better understanding and improvements in data collection as well as the expansion of the services available. For example, in Central and Eastern European Member States homelessness – in the sense of being an acknowledged social problem – only emerged in the early nineties and there has since been a rapid development of the available services in terms of shelter and temporary accommodation which has increased the visibility of homelessness and housing exclusion. In Sweden improvements in the main data collection tools were cited as a contributing factor in upward trends.

### *Group 2: Reduction in Homelessness Over the Past 1-5 Years*

**Table 2.3 Member States where Reduction in Homelessness Reported in the Past 1-5 Years**

| Member State | Evidence of reduction | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Finland | At the end of the 1980s, statistics showed that there were almost 20,000 homeless people in Finland. By 2008, this had fallen to about 8,000 people. There was a slight rise in homelessness in 2009, with figures climbing to around 8,200. This increase was caused by a shortfall in social housing provision, which is now being compensated for. According to the results of the yearly housing market survey by ARA, homelessness decreased again to around 8,000 in 2010-2011. There have been particular decreases in the number of long-term homeless people as a result of the national strategy. | Successive ambitious homelessness strategies. |
| Netherlands | There has been a sustained and rapid reduction in people living rough/emergency accommodation in the four main cities. A fall from 290 to 250 people sleeping rough on an average winter night was recorded between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 in the four main cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.<br>The umbrella organisation of shelter services reports that the percentage of clients using night shelters has decreased from 24% to 16% between 2008 and 2010. | The reduction was attributed to the implementation of the quasi-national strategy. |
| **Additional cases** | | |
| *Scotland* | The data for the quarter April - September 2011 shows a 20% reduction in statutory homelessness presentations and a 20% reduction in those assessed as homeless compared to the equivalent period in the previous year. | There has been a greater emphasis on homelessness prevention in the context of Scotland's homelessness strategy. In some cases there may be a discouragement for households to register as homeless ('gatekeeping') although there is no hard evidence of this at this stage. |
| *North Rhine-Westphalia* | There is evidence of a decline in homelessness in North Rhine-Westphalia. A recent regional survey identified 16,448 people experiencing homelessness over the year 2011. 10,132 of them were temporarily accommodated by the local authorities and 6,316 supported by the voluntary sector. 470 slept rough. Previously, the survey had only taken account of those accommodated by local authorities, so this is the only part of the homeless population that is comparable over time. Comparison shows that this group has declined since 2009. As this group represents by far the largest proportion of homeless service users, it seems that there has been a decline in the general extent of homelessness. The full picture will be clearer after the next results are published. | Improved prevention measures and overall integrated action plan on homelessness that provides strategic framework and funding to help local authorities tackle homelessness in the region. |

As demonstrated by table 2.3, there are a number of EU Member States where homelessness has reportedly decreased in the past 5 years.

Reductions were associated by the national experts with specific policy interventions. All of the Member States where a reduction in homelessness was described had adopted ambitious long-term strategies which set specific targets in order to progressively reduce homelessness over the medium and long term. Furthermore, progress towards these goals was monitored. In all of the Member States where homelessness has decreased, there is a focus on long-term housing solutions and prevention as well as temporary responses to homelessness. It seems that having an integrated homelessness strategy can facilitate progress on reducing homelessness. A detailed analysis of integrated homeless strategies is included in section 2.2.1 of the report.

It is important to emphasise that the reductions described are identifiable due to the monitoring frameworks that have been developed to measure progress towards policy targets in these countries. As demonstrated by the concern over 'gatekeeping' in Scotland, it is important that indicators for monitoring are rooted in a broad definition of homelessness (such as ETHOS) and a clear ambition to reduce progressively ***all*** forms of homelessness. Without such an integrated approach, there is a risk that progress towards one or more specific targets may create, or at least mask, stable/increasing homelessness in other forms.

### *Group 3: Stable Levels of Homelessness Over Past 1–5 Years*

In Denmark, the overall level of homelessness was described as "more or less stable over the past five years". The biennial homeless census identified 5,253 homeless individuals in week 6 of 2007. That figure decreased slightly in 2009 to 4,998 individuals, but increased slightly again in 2011 to 5,290. In the case of rough sleeping, there were 509 rough sleepers at national level in 2009, and 426 according to the latest count. This corresponds to a total drop of 83 persons, or 16 percent. At the same time, stays in shelters and lengths of stay in shelter have increased. So, whilst rough sleeping has fallen, overall homelessness has not. This example demonstrates the centrality of exploring trends in homelessness in a holistic manner with reference to a broad definition such as ETHOS.

### *Group 4: Overall Trend is Unclear*

In Belgium, it is very difficult to establish an overall trend for the evolution of the homeless population because of a combination of a highly regionalised structure for policy and a lack of reliable data within the regions. In Brussels, comparison of a one night survey carried out by *La Strada* (the support centre for the homeless sector in Brussels) in 2008 and 2010 shows an overall increase of 13%, from 1,724 to 1,944, in the number of homeless people. Improvement and enlargement of the point in time survey explains at least part of this increase. In Wallonia, there is very little regional-level data available. A 2004 estimate stated that there were around 5000 homeless people.[31] In Flanders, the NGO sector has a uniform register system, but the local authorities' services do not. On the basis of the information available in Flanders, the number of clients using homeless services has remained stable in recent years (it was 10,000 in 2010). The Minister of Welfare has made progress towards setting up a regional monitoring system, which could provide more comprehensive data for the Flanders region in coming years.

In Luxembourg, there is no clear picture of changes in the general extent of homelessness over time at national level. However, evaluation of the Winter Action Plan showed that 297 different homeless individuals were identified during winter 2008/2009, a figure that rose to 383 people in winter 2009/2010, to 422 people in winter 2010/2011 and finally reached 499 in winter 2011/2012. This suggests that homelessness may be increasing but it does not give a comprehensive picture.

In Romania, the lack of national data also meant it was not possible to identify trends over the last five years.

## *2.1.2 Overview of Trends in Profile of Homeless Population Over the Past 1-5 Years*

The profile of homeless people varies across Europe in line with demographic and nationality characteristics.[32] Previous research has indicated that the profiles of homeless people have been changing in most European countries in recent years.[33] Key developments include:

31 De Decker, Pascal (2004), Belgium National Report for the European Observatory on Homelessness: Statistical Update.
32 Frazer, H., Marlier, E. and Nichaise, I. (2010) *A Social Inclusion Roadmap for Europe 2020* (Antwerpen/Apeldoorn: Garant)
33 Busch-Geertsema, William Edgar, Eoin O'Sullivan and Nicholas Pleace (2010) *Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe: Lessons from Research.*

- While the predominant users of services for homeless people are still middle-aged, single men, there is a growing proportion of women, younger people and families with children.

- There are concerns about "new entrants'' to the homeless population as a result of the financial and economic crisis in some countries. This involves people affected by loss of income who experience difficulty covering housing and living costs. In some Member States, housing market crises resulting from the collapse of bubbles have also made new groups vulnerable to homelessness[34]. These "new entrants" are unlikely to have been considered at risk of homelessness before the crisis.

- Although most homeless people are national citizens of the country where they are homeless, there is an increasingly significant proportion of immigrants amongst the homeless population in several (particularly EU15) countries.

The questionnaire asked respondents to report on any evidence of changes in the profile of the homeless population in the past 1-5 years. The trends described above were largely confirmed. Table 2.3 summarises the trends that national experts reported. Increases in homelessness amongst immigrants (14 Member States), youth homelessness (10 Member States) and women's homelessness (10 Member States) were the most widely reported trends. Six Member States reported increases in family homelessness and four reported "new entrants" to the homeless population as a result of the financial and economic crisis.



**Table 2.4 Overview of Reported Trends in Profile of Homeless Population in the EU**

| Member State | Increase in family homelessness | Increase in women's homelessness | Increase in homelessness amongst immigrants | Increase in youth homelessness | "New entrants" as a result of the crisis | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | - | X | - | X | - | - |
| Belgium | - | X | X | - | - | - |
| Czech Republic | X | - | - | - | - | - |
| Denmark | - | - | - | X | - | - |
| Finland | X | X | X | X | - | - |
| France | X | - | X | X | - | - |
| Germany | X | X | X | X | - | - |
| Greece | X | - | X | - | X | - |
| Hungary | - | - | - | - | - | X |
| Ireland | | X | X | X | - | |
| Italy | | | X | | X | |
| Lithuania | - | - | - | - | - | X |
| Luxembourg | - | - | X | X | - | - |
| Netherlands | - | X | X | X | - | - |
| Poland | - | - | - | - | - | X |
| Romania | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Portugal | - | X | X | - | X | - |
| Slovenia | X | - | X | | | |
| Spain | - | X | X | X | X | |
| Sweden | | X | X | | | |
| UK | | X | X | X | - | |
| **Total number of Member States reporting** | **6** | **10** | **14** | **10** | **4** | **3** |

34 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, June 2012, available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1389&furtherNews=yes

**Homelessness amongst Immigrants**

14 of the 21 Member States referred to a general trend of an increasing proportion of the homeless population being composed of immigrants. This covered both third country nationals with various statuses (workers, family members, asylum seekers, refugees, people with subsidiary protection status and irregular migrants) and EU citizens and long-term residents exercising their right to free movement. Only some of the correspondents distinguished between different categories of migrant. As a result, the analysis below does not cover all types of immigrant homelessness but summarises broad trends identified.

The overall trend of increasing homelessness amongst immigrants reflects broader evolutions in migration to and within Europe. Furthermore, it reflects clearly the fact that some migrants experience specific vulnerability to poverty and social exclusion due to precarious employment, limited access to social security and social services resulting from administrative status, as well as the impact of inadequate policy frameworks. Specific welfare rules in some countries disproportionately impact upon migrants. The scale and the nature of homelessness amongst immigrants vary a lot between these countries.

## Box 1.1 Overview of Evidence of Increasing Homelessness amongst Immigrants in Different Member States

In 2010, approximately 63% of all those registered with homeless services in **Spain** were immigrants.[35] Data from numerous Spanish cities (including Madrid, Barcelona, Llieda Castilla, Leon, Salamanca, Segovia and Soria) indicate a high and increasing proportion of homeless foreigners over recent years. Rough sleeper counts between 2006 and 2008 in Barcelona, Madrid and Lleida indicated that immigrants made up 50-75% of rough sleepers. Between 2008 and 2010, the organisation *Fundación Arrels* reported a 20% increase in the numbers of immigrants accessing their services in Catalonia.[36] Data from a national survey in 2005 showed a clear predominance of people from Africa (43.6 per cent of all migrants), followed by EU nationals (20.8 per cent), the rest of Europe (16.7 per cent) and North and South America (14 per cent). Moroccans, Romanians and Algerians were the nationalities that were most strongly represented.[37]

In **Italy**, surveys also indicate that migrants represent a high and growing share of homelessness service users. A 2012 national survey of homelessness estimates that there are 28,323 homeless foreigners in Italy, accounting for 59.4% of the homeless population.[38] A study by the Caritas Diocese found that the number of homeless people doubled in Pisa between 2000 and 2009 and that between 2006 and 2009, the number of foreign nationals amongst them increased by 55% (the number of Italian nationals rose by 27%).[39] At present, 77% of homeless people are foreign nationals in Naples and 73% in Bologna.[40] The Italian national expert reported that homelessness and poverty is affecting a broader societal group than in the past. This is reflected by the fact that immigrants from a more diverse range of countries than prior to the crisis seem to be using homeless services. Certain areas in southern Italy such as Campania where there are high levels of immigration are particularly affected by increasing numbers of homeless migrants. In the last decade, the migrant population in Campania has grown from 68,159 to the current estimated 131,335. In addition, there are approximately 50,000 undocumented migrants in the region. The national expert highlighted that migrants experiencing or at risk of homelessness in these regions are currently less likely than prior to the crisis to succeed in the "traditional" trajectory of moving on to other parts of the country and accessing employment. This means that they can become trapped in areas with relatively low costs of living and low levels of territorial regulation.

35 Bosch Meda, J., Homelessness among Migrants in Spain, *European Journal of Homelessness* Vol.4, pp139-154, December 2010
36 FEANTSA Flash June 2010
37 Bosch *op.cit*
38 ISTAT (2012) *2012 Survey of Homeless People In Italy* , forthcoming
39 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, June 2012.
40 *Ibid.*

In **Greece**, there are no official statistics but many immigrants experience homelessness as policy responses and infrastructure are inadequate to cope with levels of migration.[41] The crisis has worsened the situation and there are increasing reports of coercive action by police towards homeless migrants as well as violence perpetrated by citizens.

The number of immigrants using homeless services in **France** has increased dramatically in recent years. Although there is a lack of up-to-date data at national level, the Observatory of the *Samu Social* in Paris reports that people of French nationality represent less than 10% of the families in shelter. Of the remaining 90%, 57% are of African origin, 21% are from the EU and 9% from Asia.

In the **UK**, the Department for Communities and Local Government's latest rough sleeping figures reveal that 52% of people sleeping on the streets of London are foreign nationals, and 28% are from within the EU.[42] London is of course not representative of the UK as a whole in this respect, as it experiences higher levels of migration.

In **Finland**, the national expert reports a significant increase in the number of homeless immigrants over recent years. According to a national survey, in 2010 over 13% of single homeless people are immigrants and 40% of homeless families. The number of single homeless immigrants rose from 306 in 2007 to 707 in 2010. Real figures are even higher because not all cities collect data on migration.

The latest (2011) national mapping of homelessness in **Sweden** reported that the over-representation of people born outside Sweden within the homeless population was more pronounced than in the previous mapping (2005).

In **Ireland**, homeless service providers have reported increased demand for services from non-Irish citizens. The 2008 'Counted In' survey reported that most adults in homeless services (84%) were Irish nationals and that nearly 1 in 6 (16%) were of foreign nationality. The majority of people of foreign nationality were EU citizens (10%), especially people from the UK, Poland and Romania. A minority were non-EU citizens (6%). Overall, there was an increase in the number of people of foreign nationality in homeless services compared to 2005, when the previous count was carried out. The Habitual Residence requirement for accessing social assistance in Ireland increases homelessness amongst non Irish nationals and some returning Irish nationals.

In **Luxembourg**, the national expert referred to increasing diversity in the nationality of service users. Looking at accommodation for young homeless people in Luxembourg City, he reported a majority of Luxembourgers (45% of residents); 32% nationals of another EU Member State; 18% third country nationals and 5% unknown.

In the **Netherlands**, although the proportion of service users from Central and Eastern European Member States remains quite small, it is rising. In 2008-2009 it rose from 0.5 to 1.7% of clients in social care.

41 Aris Sapounakis *The Early Stages in the Life of Immigrants in Greece: A Case of Extreme Conditions of Poverty and Homelessness*

42 Department of Communities and Local Government (2011) *Rough Sleeping Statistics England - Autumn 2011 Experimental Statistics*, available at http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/20936571.pdf

As demonstrated by Box 1.1, foreign-national EU citizens have been increasingly represented amongst homeless service users in recent years in a number of EU-15 countries. This concerns mainly EU citizens who have moved from Member States that joined the European Union from 2004 in order to work or seek employment. Depending on their precise situation, these citizens may be ineligible or have difficulty accessing social security benefits in their host country, and as a result are particularly vulnerable to homelessness if they become unemployed or are unable to find adequate work. In France, outreach organizations working in some areas of Paris indicate that 40% of their clients are young people from Eastern Europe. As mentioned above, 28% of rough sleepers in London are EU citizens from abroad.

In some contexts, vulnerability to homelessness for EU citizens living abroad has been increased by the crisis. Those employed in the informal labour market have been particularly exposed to layoffs and wage cuts. Workers in the construction industry in Member States such as the UK and Ireland have been especially affected by the collapse of housing bubbles. For example, in Ireland, migrant workers have been hit harder than Irish workers in the recession, experiencing an annual rate of job loss of nearly 20% in 2009, compared with one of 7% for Irish nationals.[43] Faced with this new economic reality, many EU citizens have decided to return or to remain in their country. For example, Polish immigration to the UK was highest in 2007 at 96,000 Polish citizens, but this declined to 39,000 in 2009.[44]

Public authorities in some Member States (such as the UK, Ireland and Denmark) have introduced repatriation programmes for homeless EU citizens from Central and Eastern Europe. There are serious concerns as to the extent that these programmes really take account of the wishes and social rights of people in very vulnerable situations. There is no obligation for Member States implementing this kind of programme to ensure that returnees will not be homeless upon arrival in their country of origin. Evidence from this research shows that at least some of those people returning to their country of origin experience homelessness when they arrive. Both Poland and Lithuania reported anecdotal observations that an increasing number of homeless service users are citizens returning (voluntarily or forcibly) from other Member States. As yet, there is no concrete evidence from research to confirm this.

The living conditions for non-EU workers, particularly seasonal workers, are emerging as an important issue in several countries. An investigation in 2010 revealed that African migrants employed in Spain to grow salad vegetables for supermarkets were paid half the minimum wage and were living in shacks without sanitation or access to drinking water.[45] In January 2010, the Italian national authorities found that in Rosarno (Southern Italy) around 2,500 African seasonal workers were sleeping in tent settlements and abandoned warehouses that were unhealthy and lacking even basic sanitation facilities.[46]

Asylum seekers and refugees were mentioned by several national experts as being increasingly represented amongst the homeless service user population. Inadequate asylum systems relative to demand in a number of countries are a major factor in this. Although there is a lack of figures, large numbers of asylum seekers are living rough and in very poor housing conditions in Greece and Italy. Due to their position on the borders of Europe, as well as other factors, these countries face particular pressures in this respect. The poor living conditions for asylum seekers in Greece have attracted particular attention, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees describing the Greek asylum system as having "collapsed". In January 2011, The European Court of Human Rights found that Belgium and Greece had violated articles 3 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which cover the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the right to an effective remedy. Greece violated the convention because of woefully inadequate detention conditions and deficiencies in its asylum procedure. Belgium violated the convention by sending asylum seekers back to such conditions under the Dublin II mechanism, and denying effective remedy against an expulsion order. Following the ruling, a number of countries temporarily halted returns of asylum seekers to Greece. In Belgium the Federal Government has been unable to provide sufficient accommodation for asylum seekers, resulting in increased demand upon homeless service providers and asylum seekers sleeping rough. The federal government agency responsible for the reception of

43 Ibid.

44 UK Office of National Statistic, *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*, August 2011, available at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/august-2011/polish-people-in-the-uk.html

45 Feantsa, Flash Newsletter February 2011

46 FEANTSA (2011) *Opinion on the proposal for a directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment*

asylum-seekers (Fedasil) has been repeatedly condemned by the administrative courts for failing to provide housing to asylum-seekers.

Homelessness amongst asylum seekers is also a growing issue in France. The French system for accommodating asylum seekers has a capacity for 35,000 applicants per year with an average claim processing time of 9 months. However, the current flow is more than 50,000 applicants per year and the average processing time 19 months. The mainstream homeless services absorb both those asylum seekers who are not accommodated by the asylum system and those whose asylum claims have been unsuccessful but who remain on French territory.

Whilst most of the reports of increasing migrant homelessness come from EU-15 countries, some Central and Eastern European countries are also concerned. The situation of homeless refugees in Poland was highlighted by a report on homelessness by Institute of Public Affairs (*Instytut Spraw Publicznych* - IPA).[47] According to the report, 20 to 30% of all refugees residing in Poland are homeless and 10% are roofless. The report indentifies that single mothers or large families are particularly endangered by homelessness in Poland. The national correspondent from Slovenia reported that, on the basis of experience of workers in homeless services, the number of foreign people facing homelessness in Slovenia is increasing.

A recent development is that some of the countries where foreign nationals have represented a high proportion of homeless service users in recent years are currently experiencing an increase in the proportion of nationals. For example, homeless people born in Portugal represented 68% of the total number of homeless people supported by AMI in 2007. Four years later this proportion had risen to 77%. This may reflect changes in migration patterns as a result of the crisis as well as new vulnerabilities created by the impact of the financial and economic crisis. Groups previously less at risk of homelessness are now more vulnerable. In 2011 most service users of the Italian 'street lawyers' (*Avvocati de Strada*) organisation were non-Italians, but they also reported an increase in Italians seeking assistance (31% of the total). In Spain, there is evidence in Cordoba and Almeria of increasing proportions of Spanish people amongst homeless service users.

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a detailed analysis of the level of homelessness amongst immigrants in different situations in the European Union. Nonetheless, the results outlined here clearly indicate that this is a growing policy concern in several Member States. The nature and extent of the issue varies between different regions in the European Union. The relationship between homelessness and migration requires more attention in the elaboration of policy responses to homelessness both at national and at European level. There is also an urgent need to better understand the impact of migration and asylum policy on homelessness and to ensure that policies in these areas do not cause homelessness.



### Youth Homelessness

There is considerable diversity in the definition of 'youth' for policy purposes.[48] No attempt is made here to fix a specific age band for youth homelessness. Instead, the situations described by national experts are taken as a starting point and the term 'youth' is used flexibly to incorporate diversity between Member States whilst describing overall trends. It is worth underlining that youth homelessness is often underestimated because many young people sofa surf with friends or relatives and are therefore 'invisible' as regards many assessments of homelessness.

Previous research has established a number of distinctive features of the pathways into homelessness for young people.[49] The transition to adulthood, which involves entering the labour market, as well as the shift to living independently or in partnership, can be a period of heightened risk of homelessness. A range of factors can further increase this risk. Young people leaving State Care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Family breakdown is also an important factor in youth homelessness.

An increase in youth homelessness was reported in 10 of the 21 Member States: Austria;[50] Denmark; France; Finland; Germany; Ireland; Luxembourg; the Netherlands; Spain and parts of the UK. For approximately half of these countries, there was some statistical evidence to demonstrate this trend, including:

47 K. Wysieńska and N. Ryabińska, (2010) *Bezdomność uchodźców w Polsce – wyniki badania pilotażowego*, (Warsaw)

48 Smith, J. (ed.) (2008) *A Comparative Report on Youth Homelessness and Social Exclusion in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK*, A Preliminary Study for the European Research Project Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless People (CSEYHP), available online at: www.movisie.nl .

49 O'Sullivan, E. (2008a) Pathways through Homelessness: Theoretical and Policy Implications, in: J. Doherty and B. Edgar (eds.) *In My Caravan, I Feel Like Superman': Essays in Honour of Henk Meert, 1963–2006* (Brussels: FEANTSA and Centre for Housing Research, University of St Andrews), pp.71–100.

50 Increased youth homelessness was only reported in Vienna and not in other cities for which data is available such as Salzburg.

- In 2011 in Denmark, 1,002 homeless service users were aged between 18 and 24, an increase of 58% compared to 2009. Also in 2011, young people accounted for 19% of the total homeless population compared to 13% in 2009.



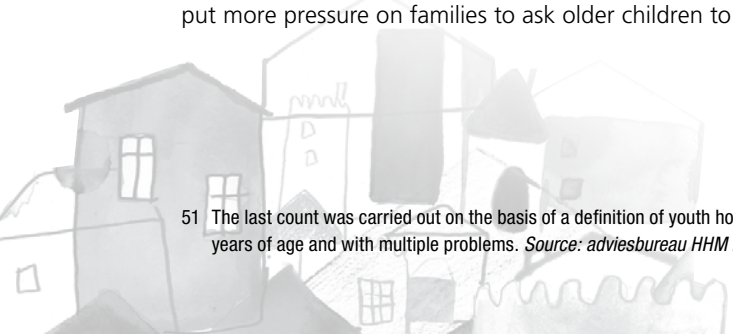
- In December 2011, the umbrella organisation Homeless Link launched a survey of homeless charities and local authority housing teams in England. Nearly half of homelessness services (44%) and councils (48%) reported increases in young people seeking help because they are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. This increase is also borne out by government data which showed that there were 4,310 homeless people aged between 16 and 24 years who were rough sleeping or living in emergency shelters/temporary accommodation in autumn 2011. This represents an increase of 430 people compared to autumn 2010.

- In the Netherlands, there were 9,000 homeless young people under 23 in 2010. This represents an increase of 50% compared to 2007 when 6,000 young homeless people were identified. Although some of the increase can be attributed to a new definition of youth homelessness, evidence of rising youth homelessness is supported by other sources.[51] The umbrella organisation *Federatie Opvang* reported a record number of people aged under 23 staying in shelters for homeless people and victims of domestic violence in 2010. The total number of service users in this age bracket was 8,791 in 2010, an increase of 16% from 7,574 in 2008.

One of the central causes of youth homelessness cited by experts was limited welfare protection during the transition to adulthood. In the Netherlands, for example, welfare entitlements are very limited for people under 21. This makes young people extremely vulnerable on the housing market and increases the chance that issues such as family breakdown will trigger homelessness. In some countries, austerity measures are leading to cutbacks that negatively affect young people. In the UK, changes to housing benefit as of 2013 will mean that people under 35 will only be able to claim a shared accommodation rate. The current cut-off age is 25. Broader changes to housing benefit may also put more pressure on families to ask older children to leave home because deductions for non-dependents are being increased. The introduction of a four bedroom limit used to calculate rates may have the same effect. In Denmark, inadequate benefits for unemployed people under the age of 25 were cited as contributing to increased youth homelessness.

A major structural cause of increasing youth homelessness is unemployment. The financial and economic crisis has caused dramatic rises in unemployment, and specifically youth unemployment in many European countries. The average youth unemployment rate in Europe is 22.6%. Unemployed young people are very vulnerable on the housing market. In some countries like Greece (51.2%), Spain (51.1%), and Portugal (30.1%) youth unemployment is particularly high. Although data on youth homelessness is poor, there is anecdotal evidence of increased youth homelessness in these contexts. Service providers see increased demand for services from young people. Changing family status (e.g. divorce and remarriage) and the breakdown of family relations are recognised as common factors in young people's pathways into homelessness. Limited access to welfare and poor employment prospects may mean that the chances of this type of situation leading to a homelessness outcome are increased.

The lack of adequate aftercare for young people leaving State Care is cited as one of the major causes of youth homelessness in a number of countries. For example, in the Netherlands, young people are discharged from care at the age of 18 without sufficient support to ensure that housing, income, health care and other necessary elements for stable transition are in place. In Ireland, attempts have been made to address this issue. One of the measures included in *The Way Home* strategy is the establishment of arrangements for appropriate discharge policies and practices for child care services whereby housing and follow-up supports are arranged in collaboration with housing providers and community based services. An inter-agency group established by the Health Service Executive has developed an innovative joint protocol with housing authorities to give priority access to social housing for young people leaving care. This is a recent development, and the national expert points out an ongoing gap between policy and practice in terms of implementation.



51 The last count was carried out on the basis of a definition of youth homelessness agreed in May 2010: young people residentially or "literally" homeless under 23 years of age and with multiple problems. *Source: adviesbureau HHM in opdracht van het ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*

Austerity measures impact on the viability of specialist homeless services such as those working on youth homelessness. They may be more vulnerable than "bottom line" services. There is often a poor legal basis for youth homeless services which may render them particularly vulnerable to funding cuts. In the UK, the end of "ring fencing" around a programme called Supporting People, which funded housing-related support services has been significant in some areas. This has led to major cuts by many local authorities. Supporting People has been the most significant funder of specialist accommodation and housing related support for vulnerable young people.[52] In contrast to England and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have protected Supporting People funding for the time being.

Increasing awareness of youth homelessness because of integrated policy approaches mean that it is becoming more visible and therefore more reported in some contexts. In Denmark, one of the goals of the national strategy is that "No youngsters should stay in hostels but be offered other solutions". The Danish national expert suggests that the focus on youth homelessness resulting from the strategy has made municipalities more aware of hidden homelessness amongst young people. The rise in youth homelessness has been particularly strong in the category of staying with friends and relatives, which is often considered a "hidden" form of homelessness. Nonetheless, more structural factors relating to limited unemployment benefits for people under 25 clearly play a role. Progress has not been made towards the target of reducing shelter use amongst young people in Denmark. The latest count from the Social Appeals Board of users of Section 110[53] accommodation has registered a general increase in the number of youngsters aged 18-24 in shelters and hostels. According to the Social Appeals Board's annual statistics, 12 percent of all people who stayed overnight at shelters in 2010 were between 18 and 24 years old. This is an increase of 7 per cent compared to the statistics from the year before.

### Women's Homelessness

10 of the 21 countries reported an increase in homelessness amongst women. Data to support this trend was, with few exceptions, quite weak and some reports were anecdotal. There was data from local level e.g. the annual homelessness survey carried out in Salzburg shows a steady increase in the proportion of women service users since 1995.

An important factor contributing to this trend in some contexts is the increasing visibility of women's homelessness. Progress in understanding and defining homelessness, including the influence of the ETHOS typology, mean that a wider spectrum of living situations are considered in relation to homelessness, allowing women's homelessness to become more visible. In some countries, the living situations in which homeless women may be likely to find themselves (particularly staying with family and friends) are still poorly accounted for in homelessness data. For example, in Slovenia, the national expert commented that it was likely that homelessness amongst women was much more widespread than existing data suggests.

Another likely factor contributing to increasing homelessness amongst women is change to family structure with increasing instances of divorce and family breakdown, as well as more people living on their own for longer. There is overlap between increasing homelessness amongst women and increasing family homelessness (see also discussion under family homelessness later in this chapter).

In a number of countries, a growing proportion of women was identified in the younger homeless population. The national federation of homeless organisations in Germany, BAG W, reported that the proportion of women is relatively high in younger age bands. 2011 statistics from North Rhine-Westphalia show that the proportion of women amongst homeless under-25s is more than a third. According to the 2008 'Counted In' survey in Ireland, amongst the youngest age cohorts of homeless service users (18-25), women outnumber men in absolute terms. The proportion of women aged 18-34 is also higher than the proportion of men. In Scotland, the overall profile of the homeless population has remained steady with the exception of an increase in the proportion of women under 25 over the past 9 years. Although there has been a reduction in the actual number of homeless women, the numbers have reduced more slowly for women than for young men. A suggested reason for this is more extensive service offer for the latter group.

52 Deborah Quilgars, Suzanne Fitzpatrick and Nicholas Pleace (2011) *Ending youth homelessness: Possibilities, challenges and practical solutions, Centrepoint, available at: http://www.centrepoint.org.uk/media/72034/ending_youth_homelessness_2011_think_piece_-_full_report_final.pdf*

53 The Social Service Act (1998) lays out the obligations of Danish local authorities to provide various forms of temporary accommodation. Section 110 defines the provision for homeless people as "24-hour accommodation provisions aimed at individuals with special social problems, who do not have or are unable to reside in their own accommodation, and who have a need for accommodation provision and for provisions for enabling support, welfare services and subsequent assistance […]"

There is an overlap between women's homelessness and domestic violence in a number of contexts. Women fleeing domestic violence are considered as part of the homeless population in some Member States. In Flanders in Belgium, an increase in homelessness amongst women over the past twenty years was explained by the national expert as a result of increasing domestic violence and growing willingness to report it. In the Netherlands, *Federatie Opvang* (the national umbrella of shelter services) reported that the number of clients in women's crisis centers had risen by 5% between 2008 and 2010, representing an increase to 3,440 clients and meaning that existing services were running at capacity.

In Portugal, the service providers AMI reported a growing number of women service users - from 28% in of the total in 2007 to 31% in 2011. In Spain, service providers reported a general perception that women were increasingly represented in homeless services. It seems likely that the growing numbers of women reflect the flow of "new entrants" into homelessness as a result of the crisis (see below).

**"New Entrants" to Homelessness as a Result of the Crisis**

In 4 countries (Greece, Portugal, Italy and Spain), the national experts reported a broadening the socio-economic profile of homeless service users as a result of new vulnerabilities created by the financial and economic crisis. This concerns some of the countries that have been worst hit by the crisis in terms of GDP and unemployment.

In Greece the phenomenon of the "new homeless" is widely reported. The estimated 25% increase in homelessness since the onset of the crisis includes people whose living situation has changed dramatically in the context of the crisis and who can no longer cover housing and living costs. The homeless service provider Klimaka reports that in the past, most of its clients were single homeless people and a majority had addiction problems and/or mental health issues. Now, they face overwhelming demand from the "new" homeless, who are characterised by higher levels of qualifications and work experience and who do not present complex needs beyond not being able to meet housing costs. In Spain, there are reports of a growing number, including from the middle class, of people resorting to services such as food distribution as a result of becoming unemployed. Whilst users of these services are not all homeless, it is an indication of increasing vulnerability. A survey of homeless people in Zaragoza in November 2010 revealed that 55% had become homeless because they had lost their job and 20% because of financial problems. In Portugal, AMI reported that between 2007 and 2011, the percentage of people accessing their services for the first time rose from 634 in 2007 to 696 in 2011, reaching 10% of service users.

New entrants to homelessness partly reflect growing vulnerability as a result of loss of owner-occupied housing in some countries. Homeowners have become more exposed to risk of housing loss and therefore potential homelessness as a result of recession and the collapse of housing bubbles in a limited number of EU Member States including Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland and parts of the UK. Some Member States (especially Spain, the UK and Ireland) experienced rapid inflation of house prices prior to the crisis as a result of various factors including changes in mortgage markets and housing policy promoting ownership. Ireland experienced the largest bubble, with property prices tripling between 1992 and 2006. House prices in the 10 years before the crisis more than doubled in France, Spain and the United Kingdom. The onset of the crisis triggered a decline in house prices. As a result, the rate of defaults on mortgages and foreclosure proceedings has increased in some countries, with more people facing mortgage negative equity. Along with oversupply, foreclosures helped accelerate a fall in property prices, leading to more foreclosures. The fall in house prices was particularly dramatic in Ireland with a reduction of 41% between 2006 and 2011. Although data is available on the number of foreclosures in the affected countries, it is not clear how many of these actually end in homelessness for the residents. Nonetheless, the rise in housing loss amongst homeowners can be understood as representing increased vulnerability to homelessness amongst this group in some Member States. As part of responding to the crisis, this issue merits more attention in a number of national contexts. The above case-studies suggest that one impact of the crisis has been increased exposure to risk of homelessness amongst homeowners in some Member States.

Spain has experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of mortgage foreclosures since the beginning of the financial and economic crisis. In 2010, 93,636 foreclosures took place, compared with 25,943 in 2007.[54] Spanish mortgage law generally imposes unlimited personal liability on the borrower and mortgages are tied to both the mortgaged property and all present and future assets. If the homeowner stops making payments, both the property and other assets can be claimed by the creditor. According

54 General Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ) cited by national expert

to Spanish legislation, during the foreclosure procedure the creditors may request the adjudication of the house for as little as 60 per cent of its appraisal value if there are no bidders at the auction. Those evicted, after losing their homes, must still pay the remaining debt as well as the judicial fees. This has left many people in very vulnerable situations and has sparked public outcry. National grassroots initiatives have been created to fight eviction proceedings following foreclosure - *Stop Desahucios* (Stop Evictions) and the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (the "platform for those affected by mortgage defaults"). In February 2012, the Spanish government announced a "Code of Good Practice" for mortgage lenders. In certain circumstances, lenders who implement the code should postpone evictions for two years. The code also includes some measures to prevent seizure of the borrowers' personal assets after they have been evicted. However, there is no obligation for banks to follow the code and there are no sanctions for non-compliance. The code is only applicable in very limited circumstances: all the members of the household must be unemployed, the monthly mortgage instalment cannot be more than 60% of the family income, and there must not be a guarantor for the mortgage. As a result, many are not protected by the measure.

In Hungary, there has been a specific problem of foreign currency mortgages. Approximately two-thirds of mortgage loans in the country are in Swiss francs. Borrowers have been exposed to an upward swing in the value of the Swiss franc, pushing up monthly payments to unaffordable levels and triggering defaults.

In Ireland, a growing number of people are experiencing mortgage arrears and mortgage stress. According to the Central Bank, in December 2011, there were 768,917 private residential mortgage accounts held in Ireland with a value of €113.5 billion. Of these mortgages, 70,911 or 9.2% were in arrears of more than 90 days compared to 5.7% in December 2010.[55] Although the number of homeowners in mortgage arrears has increased, the scale of the increase has been reduced by a number of policies including a code of conduct on mortgage arrears, restructuring of borrowing, a mortgage-to-rent to scheme and a Mortgage Interest Supplement to help households in difficulty. Similar schemes have been developed in other countries facing increases in foreclosures.

In several national contexts, evictions from rental housing (in the private and/or social housing sector) have increased as a result of the crisis. Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, England, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Poland and France were amongst the countries reporting increases in evictions. In Italy, evictions carried out with the intervention of bailiffs increased from 20,608 in 2001 to nearly 30,000 in 2010, an overall increase of 44.7%. This is a factor in the flow of "new entrants" into homelessness. Rental arrears are the main cause for evictions and increases reflect growing unemployment, austerity and in some cases rising rents as a result of the crisis. There is no data on how many people affected become homeless, or for how long.

In both Portugal and Spain, changes to rental regulation in response to the crisis have weakened tenure security. In Portugal, under the EU-IMF Adjustment Programme, a new urban lease law has been approved, aiming at faster eviction procedures and introducing a sunset clause of five years for contracts currently under rent control. In Spain, measures have been introduced to streamline eviction processes.

In other Member States, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, levels of evictions have reduced in recent years. In the UK, both Wales and Scotland reported decreases in eviction in the social housing sector in recent years but highlighted that there were concerns that this would increase as a result of changes to benefits under austerity measures.

It should be borne in mind that evictions are not always the result of rent arrears and data on the actual reason for eviction is often not available. Furthermore, the legal basis for evictions, eviction processes and procedures vary significantly between countries and this has an important bearing on outcomes. Nonetheless, as with repossession of owner-occupied housing, it seems that in some countries there is increasing vulnerability to homelessness as a result of this pathway.

### Homelessness amongst Families

Six Member States reported an increase in family homelessness (Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Slovenia). This partly reflects societal changes such as increasing divorce and family breakup. Increasing vulnerability of families with children to evictions and repossessions in the context of the crisis is also a factor. The "new entrants' to homelessness described above include families and there is clearly some overlap between the two issues.

55 Figures cited by national expert

In some countries, like France, there seems to be some overlap between increasing family homelessness and homelessness amongst immigrants.[56] According to the Observatory of the *Samu Social* in Paris, people of French nationality represented less than 10% of the families in shelter in 2009. Of the remaining 90%, 57% are of African origin, 21% are from the EU and 9 % from Asia. There is also overlap between increasing family homelessness and homelessness amongst women The *Samu Social* reported that homeless families in shelter in Paris were mostly female-headed: 54% are lone mothers with children, while fewer than 3% are lone fathers with children.



**Additional Changes in Homeless Profiles**

Poland and Northern Ireland both reported ageing of the homeless population in line with broader demographic change. This has potentially important implications in terms of service provision adapted to the care needs of this group.

In Hungary, survey data indicated a gradual reduction in the proportion of homeless people with a work income during the past 4 years. The regular work income of homeless people decreased most significantly (from 15% to 5%) among those living outside Budapest. This most likely reflects the impact of the crisis.

In Lithuania, there was a reported increase in the proportion of homeless people coming from psychological and other care institutions. This has policy implications for both future prevention and service development.

56 Emmanuelle Guyavarch, and Erwan Le Méner (2010) 'Ever More Families are Homeless in Paris' in *Homeless in Europe*, Autumn 2010, FEANTSA, available at: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/attachments/Homeless_in_Europe_Autumn2010_EN_Final.pdf.pdf

## 2.2 Analysis Part 2: Homeless Policies

This section of the report analyses Member States' policies to tackle homelessness. Specifically, it explores the extent to which Member States have developed and maintained ambitious policy frameworks for tackling homelessness, taking account of:

- the extent to which homeless policies are underpinned by integrated strategies to reduce homelessness progressively
- the extent to which policy is evidence-based;
- the extent to which the policy is comprehensive;
- the extent to which the quality of homeless services is monitored and promoted

### *2.2.1 Integrated Strategies to Tackle Homelessness*

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, a growing number of countries and regions within and beyond Europe have developed integrated strategies to tackle homelessness. A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a longer-term or overall aim. Integrated homelessness strategies serve to provide a ***medium- to long-term framework for the development and implementation of homeless policies with a view to gradually reducing, and even ending, homelessness***. This type of integrated strategy can be contrasted with policies that seek to "manage" homelessness but do not provide a long-term framework to make progress towards ending it. By establishing a clear direction for action and a comprehensive approach, integrated strategies represent a higher level of ambition in tackling homelessness. The need for integrated homelessness strategies has been underlined at EU level through a number of policy processes (including the Social OMC,[57] the European Parliament's Resolution on an EU homelessness strategy, the outcomes of the European Consensus Conference, EPSCO Council Conclusions[58] and academic reports).[59] FEANTSA has produced a toolkit (see annex 3) on developing an integrated homelessness strategy, which summarises 10 key elements found in effective strategies:

1. Evidence-based approach
2. Comprehensive approach
3. Multi-dimensional approach
4. Rights-based approach
5. Participatory approach
6. Statutory approach
7. Sustainable approach
8. Needs-based approach
9. Pragmatic approach
10. Bottom-up approach

It is of course not possible to provide a one-size-fits-all checklist for integrated homelessness strategies because much is dependent on the specific context of the region/ country concerned. Nonetheless, the toolkit provides a useful starting point for planning and analysing effective homeless strategies. It has been used as a reference point for the analysis in this chapter, which presents:

- An overview of integrated homelessness strategies in Europe
- National/regional homeless policies that are not underpinned by an integrated strategy
- National/regional contexts where progress has been made towards an integrated homelessness strategy

#### Overview of Existing Integrated Homelessness Strategies in Europe

Table 2.4 shows that integrated strategies to tackle homeless have been developed at national, quasi-national or regional level in 10 European countries. For the majority of Member States, the strategies provide national policy frameworks, setting guidance for local authorities who are responsible for implementing the policy. In some countries, the strategy focuses only on those areas where homelessness is concentrated. In the UK, there is a separate strategy for each devolved administration. In Germany, where competence for homelessness is highly decentralised, one regional government has developed a specific homelessness action plan. The appropriate political level for the development and implementation of integrated strategies to tackle

57 6500/10

58 Council conclusions *"Responding to demographic challenges through enhanced participation in the labour market and society by all"* , 3177th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg, 21st June 2012

59 Hugh Frazer and Eric Marlier (2009) *Homelessness and housing exclusion across EU Member States: Analysis and suggestions on the way forward* by the EU Network of independent experts on social inclusion (Social Inclusion Policy and Practice, CEPS/INSTEAD)

homelessness clearly depends on the political structure of the country. In some countries where competence for policies relating to homelessness is highly devolved, separate regional strategies exist.



Most of the integrated homelessness strategies that currently exist in Europe have been presented by relevant government departments as specific policy documents. It is important to emphasise that a meaningful and effective integrated strategy is more than a policy document. It is possible to have an integrated strategy without such a document. For example, the basis of Scotland's homelessness strategy is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and The Homeless etc (Scotland) Act 2003. There is no specific strategy document in addition to the legislation. Nonetheless, Scotland has an integrated, ambitious policy with clear objectives, effective participation of stakeholders, allocation of adequate resources and monitoring and evaluation. In some contexts where strategy documents have been produced, these elements are not in place and it is questionable to what extent an effective strategic framework for policy has really been implemented.

**Table 2.5 Strategies at Regional/National Level within the European Union**

| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| **1. Denmark** | **A STRATEGY TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS IN DENMARK, 2009–2012**.<br><br>**Scope:** Focuses on the 8 municipalities with the highest levels of homelessness.<br><br>**Objectives:** 1. No citizens should live a life on the street; 2. Young people should not stay at care homes, but must be offered alternative solutions; 3. Periods of accommodation in care homes or shelters should last no longer than three to four months for citizens who are prepared to move into their own homes with the necessary support; 4. Release from prison or discharge from courses of treatment or hospitals must presuppose that an accommodation solution is in place.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** The Ministry of Social Affairs leads the strategy. Municipalities sign implementation agreements with the Ministry and determine quantifiable local targets in line with the strategy objectives. These are based on detailed mapping. Municipalities must develop monitoring processes to measures progress. The Ministry of Social Affairs coordinates overall monitoring at national level.<br><br>**Resources:** DKK 500 million (€67m) state funding allocated to the strategy. This is additional to municipal funding for statutory homeless services such as drop-in centres and homeless accommodation. |
| **2. Finland** | **PROGRAMME TO REDUCE LONG TERM HOMELESSNESS 2008-2011 AND TO END LONG TERM HOMELESSNESS 2011–2015**<br><br>**Scope:** Focuses on the 10 biggest urban growth centres with Helsinki as main priority. Focus on long-term homeless. This follows 20 years of homeless strategies targeting other parts of homeless population.<br><br>**Objectives:** The 2008–2011 phase aimed at halving long-term homelessness, and at developing more effective measures to prevent homelessness. There was a quantitative target of providing 1250 new dwellings, supported housing units or places in care facilities for homeless people. The 2011–2015 phase aims to eliminate long-term homelessness by providing a further 1,250 flats and flexible support services.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** The Ministry of Environment manages and coordinates the program, in close cooperation with The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Justice, the state Housing Finance and Development Centre (ARA) and Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) which partly funds the programme. Implementation is achieved through the signing of letters of intent with the municipalities. Both the previous and the current program include a clear plan on how the responsibilities are shared and how the progress is monitored.<br><br>**Resources:** Approximately €200 million were allocated for the overall funding of the programme between 2008 and 2011. State funding accounted for €170 million, the municipalities for €10.3 million and the Finnish Slot Machine Association RAY for €20.5 million. ARA reserved €80 million in investment grants for groups with special needs. €10.3 million from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health funded 205 support staff in services for homeless people. RAY funded the acquisition of supported housing and development projects. Similar funding arrangements have been agreed for the second phase of the programme. |

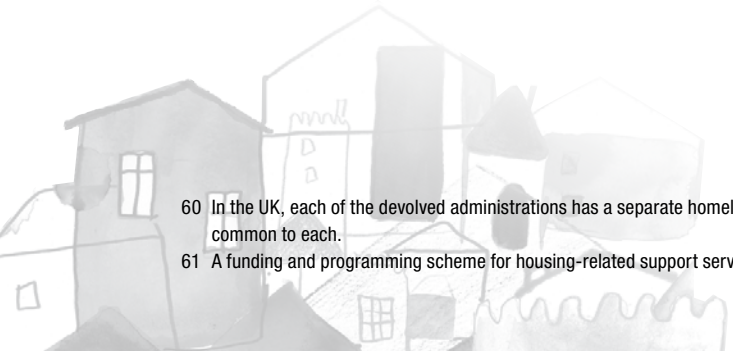
| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| **3. France** | **NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOMELESS AND POORLY HOUSED PEOPLE 2009–2012**<br><br>**Scope:** National strategy in line with designation of homelessness as a "National Priority" for the period 2008-2012. A further five year follow-up plan is currently being developed.<br><br>**Objectives:** The strategy aims to reform profoundly the system of shelter and accommodation for homeless people. Its overall objective is to reduce homelessness significantly by creating a comprehensive public service based on the principles of Housing First. To this end, the strategy focuses on:<br><br>**Improving monitoring and understanding of needs**, namely through the implementation of *Integrated Reception and Advice Services* (SIAO) that monitor local needs and services using an integrated IT system.<br>**Improving emergency responses**, namely through the implementation of *Territorial Reception, Accommodation and Reintegration Plans (PDAHI)*; through a "humanising" programme for shelters and hostels; through a rights-based approach; through structural involvement of users in policy design and through the introduction of a single contact person to oversee each homeless person's case.<br>**Prioritising housing solutions**, specifically through rent mediation; through promoting access to housing for vulnerable groups such as prison leavers, refugees, young people and people with mental health problems; through the development of "adapted" housing solutions such as 15,000 places in "*maisons relais"* (adapted boarding houses) by the end of 2011; through measures to increase access to private and social housing; through measures to fight unfit housing and combat evictions; as well as through a national social experimentation programme on Housing First for people with mental health problems called "*Un chez-soi d'abord*".<br><br>**Responsibilities:** DIHAL (the inter-ministerial General Delegation on access to housing and shelter for homeless and inadequately housed people) was created in 2010. Its role is to develop, coordinate and monitor the implementation of policies on homelessness. DIHAL leads the national strategy. Responsibility for implementation is shared with regional and local authorities.<br><br>**Resources:** A range of funding has been made available to support the strategy including €170 million over three years to "humanise" temporary accommodation; €200 million to fight unfit housing; funding for the experimental rental mediation scheme "*Solibail*" in Paris; funding for a large experimental Housing First programme and funding for social housing. The complexity of funding streams and the division of competence between government levels mean it is not possible to quantify an overall "homelessness" budget. Between 2006 and 2010, spending on the shelter sector rose by more than 50% - from €753.02M to €1,130.17M. Since 2010, budgets have stabilised as the strategy aims to refocus funding from temporary accommodation to permanent housing. In early 2011, a government memorandum announced cuts of 2.9% compared to the previous year. NGO service providers have been critical, of the fact that central budgets have not developed in line with the stated ambition of the national strategy for reform and that insufficient investment has happened in prevention and permanent housing. |
| **4. Ireland** | **THE WAY HOME: A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS ADULT HOMELESSNESS IN IRELAND, 2008-2013**<br><br>**Scope:** An overall national policy framework accompanied by an implementation plan. Guides development of local homeless strategies.<br><br>**Objectives:** 1. To reduce the number of households who become homeless through the further development and enhancement of preventative measures 2. To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough 3. To eliminate long-term homelessness (specifically people spending more than 6 months in temporary accommodation) 4. To meet long-term housing needs 5. To ensure that all services for people who are homeless are effective in addressing needs 6. To re-orientate spending on homeless services away from emergency responses to the provision of long-term housing and support services<br><br>**Responsibilities:** The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (the Department) has overall responsibility for the strategy. A Cross Departmental Team on Homelessness was set up in 2000, chaired by the Department. A National Homelessness Consultative Committee was established in 2007 to provide ongoing input into the development and monitoring of homelessness policy from stakeholders. Local authorities have a statutory duty to produce three year action plans on homelessness in accordance with the strategy and for implementing Homelessness Consultative Forums.<br><br>**Resources:** The strategy has been supported by significant financial resources. For example, €60 million was earmarked for homeless services in 2012. Implementation has been poor and a major challenge in the current financial and economic context is a lack of funding to promote access to affordable and secure housing for people ***moving on from homelessness*** with support Capital funding for social housing was reduced by 67% between 2008 and 2011, from €1.38bn to €450m. |

| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| **5. The Netherlands** | **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SOCIAL RELIEF: 2006-2010 AND 2011- 2014**<br><br>**Scope:** Initial focus on 4 major cities (G4) then expanded to 43 municipalities (out of the total 415). The first phase lasted from 2006-2010 and the second phase covers 2011-2014.<br><br>**Objectives:** 1. To ensure that all homeless persons have incomes, accommodation suited to their needs, a non-optional care programme and feasible forms of work; 2. To end homelessness following prison discharge; 3. To end homelessness as a result of leaving care institutions; 4. To reduce anti-social behavior associated with homelessness. 5. To reduce evictions (to less than 30% of the 2005 figure in the G4 cities in the first phase of the strategy). Phased, quantifiable targets relating to each of these were established by the strategy. Targets are also set at local level.<br><br>**Responsibilities**: The strategy is coordinated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS) and the National Association of Local Authorities (VNG). VWS has overall responsibility for the development and monitoring of the policy. The municipalities are responsible for developing and implementing local policies in line with the national framework. Each municipality has to produce a strategy known as a "City Compass" or "Strategic Relief Plan". All municipalities fix measurable aims in their plans in line with the local context. The VNG facilitates a platform of civil servants and an annual meeting of aldermen responsible for homeless policies. These platforms discuss progress and obstacles in developing and implementing homeless policies.<br><br>**Resources:** The budget for local strategies consists of a special allowance for the 43 cities. In 2011, this annual budget was €307,228,114. The budget is divided among the 43 municipalities according to an allocation formula. In 2011, 35 municipalities received an additional €88,978,502 for the implementation of policies and services relating to domestic violence. In addition to the central government funding, there is €254,000,000 available through the health insurance system for homeless people with psychiatric or somatic illnesses or learning disabilities. Another €135,000,000 is available from the justice system, donations, and contributions from service users (service users pay a certain contribution from their social security allowance towards room and board). The total annual budget amounts to a little less than €700,000,000. |
| **6. Norway** | **PATHWAY TO A PERMANENT HOME: STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND COMBAT HOMELESSNESS 2005-2007**<br><br>**Scope**: There was a specific National Strategy setting objectives for the 2005–2007 period. The strategy has not been renewed but national coordination on the basis of an integrated approach has continued.<br><br>**Objectives**: The strategy set the following targets for the end of 2007: 1. The number of eviction petitions shall be reduced by 50% and the number of evictions by 30%; 2. No one should have to spend time in temporary housing upon release from prison; 3. No one should have to seek temporary housing upon discharge from an institution; 4. No one should be offered overnight shelter without a quality agreement; 5. No one should stay longer than three months in temporary housing. In 2008, Norway began to focus specific attention on combating youth homelessness. Since 2009, there has been a specific focus on the development of social housing stock in targeted municipalities. A recent report on housing for vulnerable groups entitled "A Room for All" set out ongoing priorities in the area of homelessness – these centre around the normalisation of living conditions and the Housing First approach.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** A collaboration agreement was signed in autumn 2005 between the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, the former Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, and the Ministry of Justice and the Police. The Norwegian State Housing Bank also co-ordinates municipal network. The main actors in the implementation of the strategy are the municipalities, who have a statutory duty to assist the less advantaged into housing and to provide social services. Homelessness is very much integrated into housing policy.<br><br>**Resources:** A number of grant schemes from different government departments are available to support implementation. The majority of these are administered by the Norwegian State Housing Bank and the Directorate for Health and Social Affairs. |

| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| **7. Portugal** | **NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF HOMELESS PEOPLE – PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP, 2009-2015**<br><br>**Scope:** National strategy for the 2009-2015 period<br><br>**Objectives:** The overall aims of the strategy are to enhance the evidence base on homelessness through the adoption of an agreed definition and shared information and monitoring system and to promote quality in homelessness services and responses. The strategy contains the following specific targets: 1. 80 per cent of homeless people should have a 'case manager'; 2. No one should have to stay overnight on the street for more than 24 hours owing to the lack of an alternative; 3. No one should leave an institution without having all necessary help to secure a place to live.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** The strategy is coordinated by the Institute of Social Security, a public institute created in 2001 under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. To develop the strategy, an Inter-Institutional Group was formed, with representatives from public and non-profit social service providers. The group is now known as GIMAE (Implementation and Evaluation of the Strategy Group). At local level, implementation groups called NPISA (Planning and Intervention for Homeless People Nuclei) have been established. FEANTSA members are committed to follow-up of the strategy and engage in these groups at national and local level. Nonetheless, they have highlighted concern about ***a lack of concrete follow up in terms of operationalisation of the strategy in the context of the financial and economic crisis***. The strategy has not been adopted by the Council of Ministers and has not featured in European reporting processes such as the National Reform Programme. A lack of formal political backing has had a negative impact on the implementation process. For example, the foreseen data and monitoring systems have not been developed and this makes it impossible to measure progress towards the goals of the strategy.<br><br>**Resources:** At the time of its public presentation, a budget of €75 million was announced. However, the fact that the strategy has not been officially adopted means that this budget has not been allocated. In the context of the crisis, it seems unlikely that this will happen in the near future. |
| **8. Sweden** | **HOMELESSNESS – MULTIPLE FACES, MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES, 2007 - 2009**<br><br>**Scope:** National strategy for the period 2007–2009, which finished in 2010 and has not been renewed. A homelessness "coordinator" has been appointed at national level to monitor and support action on homelessness by municipalities but there is no longer an overall national strategic framework. There are currently regional strategies in Stockholm and Gothenburg.<br><br>**Objectives:** The 2007–2009 strategy set the following objectives: 1. Everyone has to be guaranteed a roof over their head and be offered further coordinated action based on their individual needs; 2. The number of people who are admitted to or registered at a prison or treatment unit, or have supported accommodation, or are staying in care homes and do not have any accommodation arranged before being discharged should decrease; 3. Entry into the ordinary housing market should be facilitated for people in the "staircase" of transitional homeless services; 4. The number of evictions should be reduced and eviction of children should be eliminated.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** Since 2002 the National Board of Health and Welfare has been responsible for developing knowledge and understanding of homelessness. The Board was commissioned to lead and coordinate the implementation of the Government's strategy in consultation with the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, the Swedish Enforcement Authority and other relevant agencies, including the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs coordinated an interdepartmental group on the strategy. Local authorities were responsible for implementation at local level. The National Board of Health and Welfare carried out monitoring at national level in cooperation with the other relevant agencies.<br><br>**Resources:** A budget of €8 million accompanied the strategy. Currently, there is no supplementary national budget in addition to the funding of statutory services by municipalities. |

| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| **9. UK[60]** | **ENGLAND'S 'VISION TO END ROUGH SLEEPING: NO SECOND NIGHT OUT' AND 'MAKING EVERY CONTACT COUNT'**<br><br>**Scope:** There are currently two strategies dealing with homelessness in England: 'Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out' and 'Making Every Contact Count' which focuses on prevention.<br><br>**Objectives:** 'Making Every Contact Count' sets out a number of priorities to improve prevention of homelessness: earlier support for vulnerable groups (young people, former prisoners, patients with mental health and addiction problems); improving cross-service working; improving financial and employment advice; developing new funding mechanisms; implementing a new homelessness 'gold standard' for quality. The 'No Second Night Out' strategy seeks to ensure that nobody has to spend a second night sleeping rough. It puts forward six commitments to achieving this.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** Both strategies were published by a Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness, which brings together relevant government departments to tackle homelessness. The main actors in the implementation of these strategies are local authorities, who have statutory responsibility for homelessness. The homeless service umbrella organisation Homeless Link is involved in the implementation of the 'No Second Night Out' strategy.<br><br>**Resources:** A variety of funding streams are available. A £400m homelessness prevention fund has been maintained over four years since 2011. Homeless Link has received a £20m "Homelessness Transition Fund" to support the roll out of 'No Second Night Out' and the delivery of strategic rough-sleeper services. Special rough-sleeper funding has been allocated to London. A funding programme called the "Homelessness Change Programme" for the refurbishment of hostel accommodation also supports the strategy. Some homeless service providers have criticised the lack of integrated approaches in these strategies, citing the fact that changes to welfare entitlements are pushing up homelessness and there is a certain level of inconsistency as a result. At local level, austerity measures mean that some homeless services are experiencing cuts. |
| | **NORTHERN IRELAND'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR 2012 -2017**<br><br>**Scope**: Strategy for the whole of Northern Ireland for the 2012-2017 period<br><br>**Objectives:** 1. To put homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery; 2. to reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing; 3. to remove the need to sleep rough; 4. to improve services for vulnerable households and individuals.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** The Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 placed a duty on the Housing Executive to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The Act states that an extensive range of agencies are also obliged to take into account the homelessness strategy in the exercise of their own functions. The Department for Social Development has overall responsibility to ensure the stipulations of the Housing Act are enacted. The "Promoting Social Inclusion Partnership", an inter-departmental, cross-sectoral working group established by The Department for Social Development, will implement and monitor the new strategy. A list of performance indicators will be used to monitor progress. These will be detailed in a forthcoming implementation plan.<br><br>**Resources:** In Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive invests almost £36m per annum in homelessness services. This includes Supporting People[61] investment, Housing Benefit, payment for homelessness services and administrative costs. |





60 In the UK, each of the devolved administrations has a separate homelessness strategy, although there are elements of the homeless policy framework which are common to each.

61 A funding and programming scheme for housing-related support services.

| Country | Description of integrated homelessness strategy |
|---|---|
| | **SCOTLAND'S HOMELESSNESS LEGISLATION**<br><br>**Scope:** Scotland's national strategic framework is contained in the the Housing (Scotland) Act, 2001 and The Homeless etc (Scotland) Act 2003. The legislation redefines statutory homeless duties for all local authorities in Scotland.<br><br>**Objectives**: The main objective of the strategy is that by the end of 2012 all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation.<br><br>**Responsibilities:** A homelessness implementation group, chaired by the Minister for Housing, brings together different bodies responsible for the implementation of the strategy (civil servants from the Scottish Government, local authorities, representatives of social landlords as well as invited experts are required to advise). Responsibility for ensuring the legal duty for accommodation and support is implemented lies with local authorities.<br><br>**Funding:** There are a variety of funding streams and it is difficult to quantify total spending. Prior to 2007 the Scottish Government provided certain 'ring-fenced' funds to local authorities. A number of specific funding streams were ring-fenced for fighting homelessness. The 'Supporting People' programme for housing related support was one of these. In 2007, the Scottish Government gave greater autonomy to local authorities over their spending and removed the 'ring fence' from the funding streams. At the same time the government removed a number of the reporting requirements from local authorities with the result that national data which existed pre-2007 on spending on homelessness no longer exists. Overall, there has been a reduction in real terms (rather than cash terms) in the funding available to Scottish local authorities for the entire range of their spending, but it is difficult to quantify in each case whether funding for homelessness has been affected. Funding for homelessness will be affected by an approximate 20% cut in Housing Benefit due to current reforms. |
| | **WALES' TEN YEAR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**<br><br>**Scope:** A national plan for the 2009–2019 period.<br><br>**Objectives:** 1. Preventing homelessness wherever possible; 2. Working across organizational and policy boundaries; 3. Placing the service user at the centre of service delivery; 4. Ensuring social inclusion and equality of access to services; 5. Making the best use of resources. In addition, a new Housing White Paper sets out the Government's plans in a context of greater powers on housing and homelessness. The plan is to place prevention at the centre of local authority homelessness duties. The White Paper, which will lead to the Housing Bill in 2013, aims to create a future where, amongst other conditions, everyone has a home that they can afford and that meets their needs; homelessness does not exist; homes are in good condition and meet appropriate standards; people are helped to live independently and support is available for those who need it. There is a specific target of ending family homelessness by 2019.<br><br>**Responsibility:** Whilst the Welsh Assembly Government has provided a national framework, the main responsibility for implementation lies with local authorities who have a statutory duty to provide accommodation and advice services. The national strategy refers to stakeholder involvement and consultation, with a series of detailed action plans and a monitoring and evaluation framework to be developed in partnership with all stakeholders, including service users"**.**<br><br>**Resources:** The Homelessness Grant programme of approx. £7 million supports local and national organisations to provide homeless services. |
| **10. Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia)** | **NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN, 2009**<br><br>**Scope:** There is no integrated strategy at national level in Germany, although there is a strong legislative basis for the provision of services and a very comprehensive service offer in many regions. North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous German *Land* has developed an integrated action plan on homelessness.<br><br>**Objectives:** The action plan aims at improved prevention measures and provides an overall integrated action plan on homelessness and funding to support local authorities. Priority areas include the promotion of innovative models and knowledge transfer, monitoring and evaluation and early intervention in evictions.<br><br>**Responsibility**: The action plan is led by the Ministry of Labour, Integration and Social Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia. Municipalities and homeless service providers are the main partners for implementation.<br><br>**Resources:** €1.12 million a year is available to support the regional strategy. |

The growing number of homelessness strategies in Europe reflects increasing ambition on tackling homelessness. These strategies introduce medium- and long-term perspectives to tackling homelessness with clear objectives.

In two of the countries described in table 2.4 (Sweden and Norway), integrated homelessness strategies for fixed periods have been developed but have not been renewed. Several other strategies listed will expire in the near future. This raises the issue of the sustainability of integrated homelessness strategies. In both Sweden and Norway, there has been ongoing follow-up of the strategy described. For example, both countries continue to monitor homelessness at national level. Evaluation of the Swedish strategy has shown that it greatly increased knowledge and understanding of homelessness. In Norway, although there is not a new strategy document, there continues to be a clear national steering of strategic priorities in the area of homelessness. The job of preventing and combating homelessness is now embedded as an integral part of the continuous work on social housing carried out by the Norwegian State Housing Bank (*Husbanken*). In Sweden, a national coordinator has just been appointed on homelessness. It is too early to judge what kind of ongoing strategic framework this will provide. Overall, it is of central importance that homeless policies be planned and implemented on a ***sustainable*** basis. This requires regular policy revision, whereby strategic objectives should be adjusted in line with progress made. Finland's homelessness strategy is a good example of this process. Homelessness monitoring revealed that impressive reductions in homelessness since the 1980s were not reflected amongst the long-term homeless population in Finland. This led to the development of the current national strategy, which specifically targets this group. This shows how national strategies should feed into ongoing policy development rather than being "stand-alone" initiatives.

One of the key elements of successful integrated strategies to tackle homelessness is the establishment of clear objectives and measurable targets. Two different levels can be observed therein:

- Medium- to long-term strategic objectives
- Operational targets

Medium- to long-term strategic objectives are important in terms of establishing policy direction and paradigm. In several countries, there have been shifts of varying degrees from "managing" homelessness in a responsive fashion to aiming to gradually reduce, and even end it. Raising the level of ambition regarding homelessness policy outcomes is one of the most important aspects of integrated homelessness strategies. Examples of medium- to long-term strategic objectives are summarised in table 2.6 below.

**Table 2.6: Overview of Medium- to Long-Term Strategic Objectives**

| Strategic Objective | Strategies that include strategic objective |
|---|---|
| Ensuring that no-one has to live rough (for more than 24 hours) | Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, Northern Ireland (Portugal, England) |
| Providing targeted interventions for specific vulnerable groups such as young people, people with mental health problems and people leaving institutions | Denmark, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, England, Northern Ireland |
| Reducing the length of time people spend homeless and/or eliminating long-term homelessness | Finland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Northern Ireland |
| Improving targeted prevention (including tackling evictions) | North Rhine-Westphalia, Finland, Ireland, Wales, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Northern Ireland |
| Prioritising access to long-term housing solutions | Ireland, Finland, France, Sweden, |
| Improving the quality of homeless services | Ireland, France, Norway, England |
| Realigning funding towards permanent solutions | Ireland, France |
| Promoting access to comprehensive/person-centred care | Netherlands, Portugal, France |
| Improving monitoring and understanding | France, Portugal |
| Expanding the legislative framework to effectively provide a right to housing for all homeless people | Scotland |

In addition to this type of overarching strategic objective, measurable operational targets are required in order to monitor progress. Such targets are often established and monitored at local level, although in many countries the national/regional strategy provides an additional layer of monitoring. For example, in Finland there was a quantitative target of providing 1,250 new dwellings, supported housing units or places in care facilities for homeless people between 2008 and 2011. The 2011-2015 phase of the strategy includes the target of a further 1,250 flats and flexible support services. These operational targets were established on the basis of detailed information about the extent of long-term homelessness and services in each municipality. Phased, quantitative targets have been set for the implementation of the Dutch homelessness strategy. Local authorities have identified the precise individuals to be provided with care over the timeframe of the strategy.

The extent to which the setting and monitoring of precise operational targets is possible is largely determined by the quality of data collection on homelessness. Improving data collection is often one of the main priorities of integrated homelessness strategies. The type of indicators that can measure progress towards operational targets include the number of people sleeping rough and in emergency accommodation, the number of houseless people, the number of households becoming homeless, the number of households moving on from homelessness, the average duration of homelessness, compliance with schemes to promote quality in homeless services, and evolutions in different types of service provision and policy at operational level. In order to be useful, operational targets need to be based on a sound understanding of the current homelessness situation. The extent to which homeless policies in Europe are underpinned by a sound evidence base is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. It suffices to say here that the setting and monitoring of measurable operational targets is a key element of effective integrated strategies to tackle homelessness.

A common feature of the strategies outlined above is the adoption of a *multi-dimensional* approach to tackling homelessness. Such an approach requires governance mechanisms defining the respective roles of different actors and stakeholders. Almost all of the strategies outlined above have involved some degree of inter-ministerial working, albeit with one ministry normally having leadership responsibility to ensure progress. Often, formal inter-ministerial structures have been created. In Ireland, a Cross-Departmental Team on Homelessness was set up in 2000. It is chaired by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and involves a wide range of government departments in order to provide a holistic response to homelessness. In Scotland, there is a multi-agency implementation group focused on delivering the right to settled accommodation for all unintentionally homeless households by the end of 2012. Chaired by the Housing Minister, it includes senior local authority representatives (elected and officials), social landlords, civil servants and invited experts in an advisory capacity. Similarly in Finland, the Ministry of Environment has nominated a steering and follow-up group and allocates funds for its coordination. All strategies involve channels for stakeholder participation, although the degree to which this is formalised varies. Multi-stakeholder steering groups have been developed to support many of the integrated homeless strategies in Europe (e.g. in the UK, Ireland and Portugal). Even where there is not a structural steering group, channels have been developed to facilitate input from stakeholders. In the Netherlands, there is regular consultation between the umbrella organisation of service providers (*Federatie Opvang*), the National Association of Local Authorities and other stakeholders such as the national association of health insurance companies and the umbrella organisation for mental health care. In Sweden, the National Board of Health organises reference groups with community representatives and NGOs. In France, a board of homeless service users has been established to provide input into the strategy. Similar structures have also been developed in Luxembourg and the Flanders region of Belgium to steer work on strategies currently under development. These governance approaches allow the integration of social affairs, housing, health, employment, education and training and other perspectives in a homelessness strategy. This is necessary given the complex and diverse causes of homelessness.

Political commitment at all levels (national, regional and local) is an important element of successful strategies. In some of the strategies summarised above, the relationships between different levels of government are determined by a strong legislative framework. For example in the UK and Ireland, statutory duties (of different dimensions) are placed on local authorities in terms of homeless and housing provision and the development of local strategies. In other

contexts, productive collaboration between different levels of government is assured through other methods such as the signing of letters of intent between the municipalities and the State in Finland. In most of the countries with a national strategy, there has been a clear government commitment to tackling homelessness. In Scotland, this commitment has been upheld by successive governments comprising different political parties for 10 years. Delivering on homelessness appears as one of 45 national outcomes for the Scottish Government to achieve. Such high-level political commitment favours effective articulation between different levels of government involved in implementing an integrated homeless strategy. The way such a commitment is manifested depends on the specific country context. In France, homelessness was declared a "national priority" and the justiciable right to housing was introduced following an outbreak of public interest in the problem in 2006–2007. In Finland, the current strategy is based on a report by an advisory group of "wise people" appointed by the Ministry for the Environment. Its successful implementation is in a large part attributable to strong political commitment from the national government, which was backed up by financial resources. In some countries, such as France and Sweden, a high level figure or homelessness "Commissioner" has been appointed by government to steer homeless policy. In the absence of political commitment, strategies cannot be considered as effective policy instruments. In the case of the Portuguese strategy, the national expert reported that there has been a lack of high-level political backing for the strategy, which has not currently been officially adopted by government. Thus, whilst many key actors are mobilised around the strategy, the potential for achieving its full implementation is currently very limited.

Adequate funding is also crucial for any long-term strategy to tackle and end homelessness. It is very challenging to compare the resources allocated to strategies in the different countries. Funding structures, the size of the homelessness problem and the actual activities funded under the strategy as opposed to under other welfare, housing or municipal funding streams differ greatly. Table 2.5 contains an overview of funding for each strategy but it is important to emphasise that these envelopes cover very different things and should not be directly compared. All integrated strategies to tackle homelessness involve the allocation of specific resources. Furthermore, adopting an intergraded approach to homelessness can also involve developing more integrated and innovative approaches to funding. For example, in the Netherlands, the strategy has involved more effective use of health insurance funding to fight homelessness. Before 2003, it was very difficult for homeless people to receive care financed by the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act. This system changed in 2003 when an independent health screening institution was introduced. For the first time, homeless service providers were able to qualify, under certain conditions, as long-term care providers. This change in the law meant that long-term care became accessible for homeless people for the first time and has been expanded. The budget from the Exceptional Medial Expenses Act increased from €26 million in 2003 to €250 million in 2010.

In Portugal, funding is a significant barrier to the implementation of the integrated homelessness strategy. Owing to a lack of political commitment, and in the context of the current financial and economic crisis, the strategy has not been allocated its foreseen budget of €75 million. As mentioned, this has seriously undermined its implementation and means that the strategy should be considered a reference rather than an operational reality at the current time. In some other countries, national experts reported concerns that progress towards the objectives of integrated national strategies could be undermined by cuts. In general, it seems that having a national strategy has so far helped to protect budgets covering homeless services in many countries. Nonetheless, cuts in other areas such as housing benefit (UK), municipal budgets (Denmark, UK) and social housing (Ireland) may seriously hamper progress on reducing homelessness. In the framework of integrated strategies to tackle homelessness, governments should adopt a consistent approach and avoid undermining progress in this way. Tackling homelessness in an effective, integrated fashion can offset the costs of managing it reactively over the longer term.

### Overview of European Countries Without An Integrated Homelessness Strategy

The countries without an integrated homelessness strategy can be divided into two groups. There are significant differences in the political priorities, service development and data collection on homelessness between the two groups:

- Group 1: Established homeless service system with lack of long-term strategic planning
- Group 2: Homeless service system in period of development

### *Group 1: Established Homeless Service System with Lack of Long-Term Strategic Planning*

***e.g. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Italy***

The countries in this group lack ***strategic objectives and operational targets to underpin a gradual reduction in homelessness over time.*** For this reason, their homelessness policies can be understood more as "managing" homelessness than seeking to end it in the long term. Related to the lack of long-term objectives to reduce homelessness is a need to improve mechanisms to monitor progress. Whilst most of these countries have some data collection on homelessness, there are significant gaps and there is a lack of monitoring of progress in tackling homelessness.

It is very important to stress that countries in this group can have relatively ***effective, well-resourced and well-established systems of support for homeless people***. For example, Germany has an extensive, well-established and high-quality homeless service system underpinned by legislation. Although there are no national or regional objectives to reduce homelessness, there is municipal-level planning of the funding and development of services. This is important as these services play a vital role in responding to homelessness. However, there remains a need to develop an overall strategy to reduce homelessness over the medium to long term. The service system in Germany covers a large spectrum of services from temporary shelter to prevention and long-term housing with support. Austria, and particularly Vienna, also has one of the most comprehensive homeless service systems in Europe. Luxembourg and Belgium equally have diversified homeless service systems.

In Italy and Spain, there is a high degree of diversity between regions with some areas having more comprehensive and adequate services than others.

Most of these countries have a legislative framework covering the provision of homeless services. This can range from a legal obligation for municipalities to provide homeless services (e.g. Germany) to more general provisions regarding social services for vulnerable groups (e.g. Spain).

A lack of strategic planning can mean homelessness is not addressed in an integrated fashion. In Spain, for example, the national expert reported that the lack of national and regional strategy meant that in much of the country homelessness continues to be primarily viewed as a social policy issue. It is therefore difficult to involve health or housing authorities and to develop an integrated approach. Another problem is that a disproportionate degree of responsibility for homelessness falls to "bottom line" or basic social services at municipal level. Regional and national public authorities are not incentivised to play a more significant role in prevention and long-term housing and support solutions.

Strategies with medium- and long-term objectives to reduce homelessness are often evident at the level of individual cities, regions and municipalities within these countries (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany). As the countries in this group tend to have highly devolved structures, there is a lot of variation in the extent of strategic planning within them. FEANTSA therefore calls on all devolved administrations to develop strategic plans to reduce homelessness gradually over the medium and long term.

### *Group 2: Homeless Service System in Period of Development*

***e.g. Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia***

The countries in this group can be described as in a phase of development of effective homeless service systems. There is considerable variation between the countries in the group, as well as between regions and municipalities within each country. In some cases there is little or no specific planning in relation to homelessness. In all cases, the homeless service system is less well developed and less comprehensive than in the countries in group 1 or the countries that have integrated strategies. Overall, there is a predominant focus on responding to homelessness through the provision of outreach, temporary accommodation and basic social support. Prevention of homelessness and support to access and maintain permanent housing are generally underdeveloped. In all of these countries there is a lack of access to affordable housing and a lack of social housing.

Many Central and Eastern European countries have experienced a rapid expansion of services as homelessness has emerged as a policy issue since the transition from communism. In the Czech Republic for example, the national expert reports that homelessness was largely neglected for many years and has only recently become a priority. Similarly, in Slovenia, growing awareness of homelessness as a policy priority in recent years has led to the rapid development of organisations, services and projects focusing on the issue. In Romania, a National Interest Programme (NIP) was launched in the mid 2000s with the aim of creating emergency social centres.

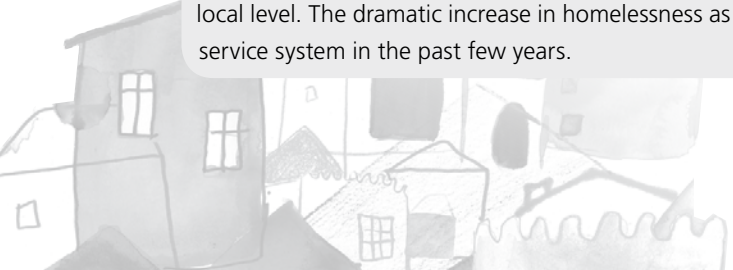
In Poland, there has been rapid expansion of the homeless sector – both in terms of its extent and the range of services provided. There has also been some important progress towards more strategic service-planning in Poland. A project is currently underway to develop quality standards for homeless services in the context of 'Strategies for Addressing Social Issues', which all municipalities have a responsibility to develop and which can include the provision of homeless services. The project is led by The Human Resources Development Centre, the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. A wide variety of stakeholders have been involved, including academics and service providers. The project represents a substantial step forward in terms of strategic planning and reflection about effective homeless services.

In most of these countries, there is some legislative basis for homeless services and policies. This is either a general obligation to provide social services, to which homeless people are entitled, or a specific obligation to provide homeless services as in Hungary, where municipalities of a certain size are obliged to provide certain homeless services.

Funding for homeless services in these countries is often inadequate. In the Czech Republic, for example, there is a lack of sustainable funding streams. The current system of annual calls for proposals co-managed by regional and national authorities' means that homeless services are unstable. Drops in funding levels since 2012 have meant that some services have closed. Structural funds play a somewhat limited role in supporting progress on homelessness because the administrative burden on service providers is so high.

One of the major barriers to developing strategic plans to tackle homelessness in these countries is inadequate data collection systems which make monitoring progress and evaluating the nature and scope of the problem very challenging. This should be a major priority for establishing integrated homelessness strategies in these contexts.

In Greece the homeless service sector is underdeveloped relative to need at a time when homelessness is very rapidly increasing. Homelessness has traditionally been framed as a social policy issue and addressed in an ad-hoc fashion at local level. The dramatic increase in homelessness as a result of the crisis has increased pressure on an already inadequate service system in the past few years.



There are a number of compelling reasons for those countries/regions that do not have integrated homelessness strategies to develop them. It should also be emphasised that the capacity of the homeless system to "manage" homelessness changes over time. This is an important reason for public authorities to engage in strategic planning on homelessness with a view to its gradual reduction. In Spain and in Greece, the current economic and financial crisis has put a lot of additional pressure on existing services which were already working at or beyond capacity. In various countries, there are problems around the functioning of the homeless system which impede its capacity to manage homelessness effectively. For example, homeless people often stay for long periods or repeatedly in temporary accommodation rather than moving on into settled housing. This can create bottlenecks and reduce the overall capacity of the homeless system. Some of those countries, such as Finland, which have shifted their policy paradigm towards finding homeless people permanent housing solutions as soon as possible, have done so precisely because homeless people were staying for long periods in "temporary" shelters. This was judged as neither sustainable nor conducive to ending situations of homelessness. The new strategy focuses on permanent housing with support as soon as possible instead. Strategic planning with the setting of long-term objectives allows public authorities to monitor changes in demand, supply and effectiveness of services better in order to respond to the needs of homeless people and make progress towards ending homelessness. Developing a homeless strategy also allows policymakers to make better use of evidence about effective intervention and to adapt policies in accordance.

**Overview of National/Regional Contexts Where Progress Has Been Made Towards an Integrated Homelessness Strategy**

NGO service providers are active in promoting more strategic planning towards ending homelessness in Europe. In Germany, the umbrella organisation BAG W works with all levels of government to promote strategic homeless policy proposals, including more comprehensive data collection. In Poland, Belgium, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain, FEANTSA members have been involved in consultations regarding the development of future strategies. FEANTSA encourages public authorities to engage actively with stakeholders in order to develop more strategic approaches to homelessness in the future.

In a number of European countries where there is not currently an operational, integrated homelessness strategy, national experts report that some progress has been made towards this. This progress ranges from very tentative steps towards establishing a strategy to advanced preparatory work.

In 2011, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg announced plans to develop a national homelessness strategy. Since then, the government has launched a collaboration platform made up of representatives of ministries responsible for homelessness, the Syndicate of Cities and Towns in Luxembourg (SYVICOL), cities and non-governmental organisations in order to draw up the strategy. The platform's preparatory work has identified the respective responsibilities of different levels of government. It has also stressed the importance of adopting a holistic approach to homelessness. This presupposes a coordinated and concerted strategy, inter-ministerial collaboration and cross-sector working. The platform has recommended creating decentralised regional centres for homeless persons, making decentralised, supervised housing units available for persons with complex needs as well as the creation of a specialised care/rest homes for homeless people with chronic or terminal illness.

In the Flanders region of Belgium, a multi-stakeholder steering group has been established to prepare a homelessness strategy. The group is composed of representatives of the ministers of welfare, housing and poverty reduction, the ministry of welfare, the umbrella organisation of local authorities, the umbrella organisation of poor people and the umbrella organisation of NGO social service providers, *Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk*. The steering group has produced a proposal for a strategy based on five strategic goals to end homelessness. The steering group is now working on developing funding possibilities to implement a more integrated approach.

In Slovenia, there have been some steps towards a more strategic approach to homelessness in recent years. In 2010, the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Education and the Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MLFSA) organized a conference on homelessness in the context of the European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The aim was to start developing a national strategy by engaging all the relevant stakeholders. It remains to be seen to what extent this conference will achieve its objectives but FEANTSA members report that follow up has thus far been minimal.

In Spain, there are no immediate plans for integrated homelessness strategies at regional or national level. Nonetheless, there has been some action which could pave the way for more integrated approaches in the future. At national level, the previous government produced a planning document in 2011 called *Shaping a Local Network of Attention to Homeless People through the Public System of Social Services: 100 Reasons and Proposals.*[62] The aim of this document was to support discussion and agreement on a framework to guide practitioners and politicians on how to plan and fund homeless services and how to orientate future policy development. Stakeholders were invited to contribute to the document at a national conference on homelessness held in Seville on the 25th and 26th of November 2010. However, there has been little sign of follow up and the change of government and ongoing financial and economic crisis provide a changing context for such follow up to happen. There have also been some developments in individual regions. Catalonia has produced a document known as the "2010 Model of Care for Homeless People". It sets out the legal framework for tackling homelessness within the region. This is seen by stakeholders as a prerequisite and a preliminary step towards a strategy with clear targets, responsible agents, set budgets, etc.

In the Czech Republic, a project was launched in March 2012 entitled *Development of Basic Design Concepts for Working with Homeless People in the Czech Republic*. The document is the outcome of an interdepartmental working group established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which includes academics and homeless service providers. The aim of the project is to provide guidance on policy development until 2020. There has also been some strategic development at local level. Prague is currently developing a homelessness strategy. Changes in local government since municipal elections in 2010 have led to a change in policy paradigm. There appears to be a shift from coercive approaches that sought to remove homeless people from highly frequented and commercial areas of the city to developing an integrated strategic approach. There is political support, including from the Mayor for this approach.

In Greece, there are some tentative signs that the extreme impact of the crisis may lead to more strategic responses to homelessness. The situation has undeniably led to more policy attention for homelessness. A Committee on Homelessness was established in January 2012 with the aim of drafting a legislative proposal and an action plan. It is too early to say what kind of outcome this will deliver.

In the 2008-2010 period, work on a national homelessness strategy was undertaken in Poland. This was led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on the request of the Parliamentary Commission for Social Policy and the Family. Key NGO service providers were invited to cooperate on the strategy. A working group was established to develop the strategy. In May 2008, the working group presented a proposal which was discussed at a conference hosted by the Ministry. Priorities agreed for the strategy at this point included data collection and analysis, the role of social welfare systems, the role of social housing, education and employment, access to the health services, financial inclusion and the problem of rent arrears, use of structural funds to fight homelessness, best practices and recommendations for legislative change. Unfortunately, cooperation on the strategy broke down and in January 2009 a less ambitious document was presented by the Ministry. This primarily concerned the regulation of specific elements of homeless services. There was no focus on strategic objectives and reducing homelessness over the longer term. At the time of writing, even this less ambitious initiative has been shelved using the financial crisis as a justification.

In Hungary, a proposal for an integrated national homelessness strategy was developed in 2008. It was the first document attempting to address homelessness in a comprehensive way in Hungary. The proposal was drafted by two well-known experts in the field and was commissioned by Miklós Vecsei, the Ministerial Commissioner for Homeless Affairs under the previous Government. The strategy proposal was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. Until now, it has not received any high-level backing and has disappeared from the agenda at present. Nonetheless, there is regular consultation with social service providers through a consultative committee and there might be potential to revive the initiative.

### *2.2.2 The Evidence Base Supporting Homeless Policies in Europe*

This section of the report will focus on the extent to which homeless policies are underpinned by solid evidence in Europe.

62 Ministerio de Sanidad, Politica Soccial e Igualdado (2011) *Configuración de una red local de atención a personas sin hogar integrada en el Sistema Público de Servicios Sociales, 100 argumentos y propuestas"*, Madrid, available at: http://www.femp.es/files/566-1117-archivo/PsH.pdf

Previous research has shown that there is considerable diversity of experience across Europe in collecting data on homelessness and using that data to implement policies and plan services. The European Observatory on Homelessness has produced detailed statistical reviews of homelessness in Europe, collating knowledge and understanding about methodologies and summarising the data available in the different Member States. This chapter does not attempt to repeat this exercise in detail but to explore to which extent policies to tackle homelessness are linked to evidence. Key elements required for an evidence-based approach to homeless policy include:

- **Links to research to enhance knowledge and understanding:** besides data collection on homelessness, evidence-based policies should use research to inform knowledge and understanding of homelessness as well as of effective strategies to tackle it. This includes commissioning research and evaluation by authorities responsible for homeless policies.

- **Clear definition of data management responsibility:** responsibility for development, implementation and coordination of data systems should be clearly allocated within the policy framework.

- **Clear definition of homelessness for the purpose of collecting data:** an operational definition of homelessness should be accepted and understood by relevant parties. There should also be an operational definition of the nature of the data to be collected.

- **Clear link between strategic goals and data-collection strategy:** the data collection strategy should underpin the formulation of strategic goals and be used to monitor progress towards these goals.

- **Adequate data-collection systems:** data-collection systems may provide information on the stock of homelessness (the number of people or households who are homeless at any point in time), the flow of homelessness (the people who have become homeless, or ceased to be homeless, during any time period), and/or the prevalence of homelessness (the number of people who have experienced homelessness during a particular time period). Data collection systems also provide information on the profile of homeless people. A range of different systems and tools are available to support homeless policies, and capture different types of data.

The table below summarises the main systems used to collect data on homelessness in Europe. Evidence-based policies need to make use of these approaches to generate sufficient information to guide and monitor homeless policy progress.

**Table 2.7: Approaches to Homeless Data-Collection in Europe**

| Approach | Method | Focus |
|---|---|---|
| Surveys (counts) | National counts | ETHOS categories 1,2, (3)<br>Homeless people<br>Point-in-time (stock) |
| | Capital city counts | |
| | Local authority surveys (national/regional) | |
| Registers | Municipal (client-based) | Homeless services<br>Social welfare services<br>Profile data<br>Prevalence, flow (stock) |
| | Service provider | |
| | NGO (client-based) | |
| Census (market surveys) | Census 2001/2011 | All ETHOS categories<br>Point-in-time (stock)<br>Infrequent |
| | Housing market surveys | |
| | Housing needs assessments | |
| | Homeless surveys | |

Source: Busch-Geertsema *et al*, 2010

The table below summarises the extent to which homeless policies are evidence based according to the input provided for this report. The table attempts to draw out the extent of data available in each country, and the relationship between evidence and policy-making. It is not a comprehensive review of data collection in the different countries. In relation to the overall extent of data, it should be noted that detailed outcomes from the 2011 census, which should address homelessness in all Member States, is not currently available in most countries and has therefore has not been included here.



**Table 2.8: Overview of Evidence Base Underpinning Homeless Policies in the European Union**

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | Some links between research and policy-making | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management at national level. | No official operational definition at national level. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. Some linkage at level of regions. | **Some data with important gaps.** The region of Vienna produces annual reports on homelessness. National surveys on homelessness have been carried by the national umbrella of homeless service providers (BAWO). There is a shared basic dataset for services providing assistance to the homeless in Vienna. In Salzburg, homeless service providers carry out an annual survey over one month. |
| **Belgium** | Some links between research and policy-making | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management at national level. | No official operational definition at national level. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. Some linkage at level of regions. | **Some data with important gaps.** No national data on homelessness. In the Brussels region, the support centre for the homeless sector, *La Strada*, carries out homeless surveys. In Flanders the NGO Centres of General Welfare, *Centra voor Algemeen Welzijn* (CAW) have a uniform client register system called TELLUS which collects quite extensive data. The local authority services Public Centres for Social Welfare - *Openbare Centra voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn* (OCMWs) do not have such a system. The Flemish Welfare Minister is currently planning a regional monitoring system. |
| **Czech Republic** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | No official operational definition at national level. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. Some linkage at level of individual cities. | **Very limited data overall.** Some counts and use of client-register systems at local and regional level. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs operates a register system on social services (including homeless services) called "OK system". |
| **Denmark** | Relatively well developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility in framework of homeless policy. The Ministry of Social Affairs coordinates overall monitoring at national level. The Danish National Centre for Social Research carries out the national homelessness count. | Definition for the biannual homeless count covers rough sleepers; users of emergency night shelters; hostel users; sleeping in hotels due to homelessness; staying temporarily with family and friends; transitional housing; institutional release from prisons; institutional release from hospitals/ treatment centres. | Well-linked. Findings from the national homelessness count and client register systems provided input into the work of formulating and implementing the national strategy. Data systems used to monitor progress towards the strategy's goals. | **Relatively extensive data.** National homelessness counts carried out biannually over a given week since 2007. Since 1999 there has been a national client-registration system on homeless hostels run by local authorities under §110 in the Social Service Act. The homelessness count gives a stock figure during the count week, whereas the client registration system on homeless hostels gives both stock and flow figures published in annual statistics. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Finland** | Relatively well developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility in framework of homeless policy. The Housing Finance and Development Centre (ARA) is responsible for collecting data as part of the housing market survey. | Definition for annual survey covers single homeless people (living rough, living in shelters or hostels, living in care/rehabilitation homes or hospital due to lack of housing, due to be released from prison with no housing, or staying temporarily with family and friends) and family homelessness (families and couples who have split up or are staying in temporary housing). | Well-linked. There are clear feedback loops between monitoring and strategic planning. Data covers a long timescale (since the 1980s) so there is a good understanding of overall trends feeding into policy. Collecting data on long-term homelessness in line with the new strategy presents a number of challenges. | **Relatively extensive data.** (ARA) conducts an annual national survey of local authorities using 15th of November as a cut-off date. This is part of the wider housing-market survey. The survey provides stock data. |
| **France** | Relatively well developed links. In particular, DIHAL has commissioned a number of studies and a large social experimentation on Housing First to feed into the current strategy. | No clear responsibility for data management in the framework of homeless policy. | Definition used for the INSEE national survey is that a homeless person either stayed in homeless accommodation or slept somewhere not intended for habitation (street, makeshift shelter, etc) the night prior to the survey. | Some linkage but lack of clear monitoring framework set out in the national strategy. | **Fairly extensive data but with important gaps.** A national survey is conducted by INSEE (the national statistics office) every 10 years within the framework of the general population census. A recent evaluation of homeless policies by the Court of Auditors called for more regular data collection, especially for regions most affected by homelessness. Other sources of data include an observatory of 115 calls (helpline for emergency accommodation), client registration data at service and organisation level, and related national surveys. A key objective of the current strategy is the implementation of "integrated reception and orientation services" in each department (SIAO) with a common information system. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Germany** | Relatively well-developed links in some regions and municipalities rather than at national level. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management at national level. | No official operational definition for the purposes of data collection at national level. There is a legal definition in that there is a strict duty under the police laws of the regional states for local authorities to provide temporary accommodation for those who would otherwise be roofless. The Social Law furthermore imposes a duty on municipalities to assist people threatened with homelessness. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. Some linkage at level of individual cities and regions e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia. | **Fairly extensive data but with important gaps.** As there is no federal competence for homelessness there is no national data collection and significant variation between regions. North Rhine-Westphalia collects official statistics on people in shelters. The national umbrella of NGO homeless service providers (BAG W) produces reports on homelessness based on the data collected by services on the profile and numbers of service users. |
| **Greece** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | No official operational definition for the purposes of data collection. A legal definition was established in 2012 which defines the homeless "mainly" living on the street, in shelters, living temporarily in institutions or similar structures or living in inadequate/unsuitable accommodation. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Very limited data overall.** A National level study was conducted in 2009 by the Ministry of Health. |
| **Hungary** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. Research on homelessness tends to take place independently of homeless policy framework. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | No official operational definition of homelessness for the purposes of policy or data collection. Legal definition of homeless person under Social Care Act as living rough, having no registered place of residence or being registered in accommodation for the homeless. The act defines a range of homeless services. The annual 3rd February survey covers rough sleeping and people staying in shelters. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Very limited data overall.** A survey of homelessness is conducted every year on the 3rd of February to provide stock data. This has been run for 14 years and involves a range of researchers, municipalities and NGO service providers on a voluntary basis. It initially covered only Budapest but has expanded to other municipalities. At national level, there are registers of certain types of homeless service provided for under The Social Care Act but there are a number of limitations regarding the quality of the data. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ireland** | Relatively well-developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility at local and national level in framework of homeless strategy. | The statutory definition regarding homelessness is set out in the Housing Act 1988. While this definition is open to broad interpretation, it is often interpreted narrowly at an operational level. The national strategy included a review of how the statutory definition is applied for operational purposes in Dublin. In carrying out this review, the Homeless Agency decided to use the ETHOS definition for operational purposes. | Plans for ongoing monitoring of progress towards strategic goals are clearly laid out in the strategy. However, implementation is very poor. The data-collection system proposed to support the strategy includes development and implementation of a national, shared, client-registration system. This system has run into numerous problems and still has not be rolled out nationally. | **Relatively limited data collection.** The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government carries out an assessment of housing need every three years. This collects data from all local authorities. The Housing Needs Assessment includes people who are deemed to be in need of local authority housing at the exact time the survey is conducted. Therefore, it excludes those not on the local authority lists and people in transitional housing and residential supported units. The Dublin Regional Homelessness Executive (DRHE) carries out a regional survey of homeless service users over one week called 'Counted In' approximately every three years in the greater Dublin area only. In 2008 'Counted In' was expanded to cover Cork, Galway and Limerick. This was a once-off development. DRHE carries out rough sleeper counts in the Dublin region in March and November. This has led to regional disparity in terms of data collection and the comparability of data. There are also shared client registration systems at local level. Whilst the national strategy lays out very ambitious plans for monitoring, the national expert reports that implementation has been undermined by delays in rolling out of the agreed national data collection system.<br><br>In the future, it appears that the Counted In survey will be discontinued. Consideration should be given to conducting Counted In on a tri-annual basis, as part of the Housing Need Assessments in order to provide continuity of methodology and an as a supplement to the administrative data collated via the online data system PASS. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Italy** | Some links between research and policy-making. | National Statistics Institute (Istat), Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs, Caritas Italiana and fio.PSD have collaborated on a new national survey of homeless people, which was published in 2012. | The national survey included people living in public spaces; people living in night shelters and/or obliged to spend several hours during the day in a public space; people living in hostels for homeless people; people living in accommodation provided by the social support system. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **The newly published national survey represents a major advance and provides extensive data for the first time.** Until this survey, systems of data collection have generally been under-developed and local in scope. |
| **Lithuania** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | In the 2001 census, homeless people were counted only in public space. For the 2011 census, a broader definition was used including people staying in institutions and accommodation for the homeless. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Very limited data overall.** At national level, the annual Report on Social Services produced by Statistical Department of the Government includes some types of homeless service. The data is collected via surveys of social services. Homeless people are also included in the Housing and Population census. In February 2012, the Vilnius Social Support Centre created a local "Homeless and Begging" database. People identified as homeless or begging and receiving any kind of social support are registered in this database. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Luxembourg** | Some links between research and policy-making. | Responsibilities currently being defined in context of forthcoming national strategy. | Currently being developed in the context of forthcoming national strategy. The 2007 national survey used the ETHOS definition. | Currently being developed in the context of forthcoming national strategy. | **Some data but with important gaps.** There is currently no uniform system for collecting data on homelessness and homeless people in Luxembourg. The main service provider organisations are currently exploring options for a shared client-register database. Two important national client-recording systems already operate for the users of women's shelter and the evolution of drug-addiction. The Ministry of the Family and Integration collates the annual reporting of service providers and publishes the results. The Ministry proposed a harmonised dataset to be collected by service providers for their 2011 activity reports. The Ministry for the Family and Integration also commissioned the research institute CEPS/INSTEAD to conduct a survey of homelessness, which was published in 2007. |
| **Netherlands** | Relatively well-developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility at local and national level in the framework of homeless strategy. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS) is responsible for monitoring progress on the strategy. The monitoring research is carried out by the Trimbos Research Institute. They report annually on progress towards the targets. The minister reports once a year to parliament. | The national strategy distinguishes between the "actual" homeless, the "residentially" homeless and the "at-risk of homelessness". The strategic objectives of the strategy cover people living rough, living in shelters, living in accommodation for the homeless and women's shelters, people leaving institutions and people living under threat of eviction. Local authorities set targets and monitoring strategies within this framework according to local reality. | Well-linked at national and local level, although some strategic goals currently not accounted for by adequate data-collection strategies. | **Fairly extensive data with some gaps.** A nationwide monitoring system is linked to the strategy. Local authorities collect data and this is processed at national level by the Trimbos Research Institute. The main sources of data are housing associations (for data on evictions), local-authority monitoring of progress towards targets and client-register systems of the central access points to homeless services in the four main cities. Some data required to monitor progress is not yet available due to lack of appropriate registration or information systems e.g. data on people leaving institutions without housing options. Client record systems are operated by both *Federatie Opvang* (REGUS) and the Salvation Army (CLEVER). *Federatie Opvang* publishes an annual national report on the number and profile of homeless service users. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Poland** | Some links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | There is no official operational definition at national level. The Social Welfare Act provides a fairly broad legal definition of homelessness and defines a range of homeless services. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Some data but with important gaps.** There is no national data-collection strategy. Homelessness was addressed by the 2001 and 2011 Housing and Population censuses but there were considerable limitations in the methodologies and definitions used. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy collects annual Social Welfare Statistics from all social welfare centres in Poland, including on homeless assistance. The Ministry also holds a register of homeless service providers. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour produced a national study on homelessness in 2010, which was repeated in 2012. However, the results of the 2012 study remain unpublished at the time of writing. NGO service providers collect homeless data in some regions e.g. the Pomeranian Forum in aid of getting out of homelessness carries out very comprehensive biennial surveys of homelessness in the Pomeranian region. A data collection quality standard has also been developed in Warsaw. |
| **Portgual** | Some links between research and policy-making. | Clear allocation of responsibility within national framework although implementation in very early stage. | The national strategy defines a homeless person is as "an individual who, regardless of nationality, age, sex, socio-economic status and mental and physical health, is roofless and living in a public space or insecure form of shelter or accommodated in an emergency shelter, or is houseless and living in temporary accommodation for the homeless." The strategy thus covers ETHOS categories 1-3. | Well linked in that the national strategy sets out clear plans for improving data and monitoring. However, proposed systems currently not operational. | **Some data but with important gaps.** A shared information system is one of the objectives of the national strategy, although so far little progress has been made towards its implementation. The Social Security Institute (SSI) has carried out a number of national surveys on homelessness (2004 Survey of local authorities and service providers; 2005 national count of rough sleepers; 2009 survey of homeless services). Client-register data is collected at local level and by service provider organisations. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Romania** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | No operational definition of homelessness at national level. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Very limited data overall.** As a result, there are no up-to-date or reliable homelessness figures. The only figures available come from a study conducted in 2004 by the Research Institute for Quality of Life and the National Institute of Statistics. Casa Iona reports that the 2011 census included the question, 'Are you homeless?' However, except for Bucharest, census enumerators did not approach homeless people on the street and it appears that few local authority/ NGO homeless services outside the capital city were visited by enumerators. The national census data will not be published until 2013. In January 2013, Casa Ioana plans to undertake a national point-in-time survey amongst identified providers of social services for homeless people. |
| **Slovenia** | Poorly-developed links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | There is no operational definition for data collection purposes at national level. The preparatory study carried out in 2010 looked at possible ways to collect data on all ETHOS categories. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Very limited data overall.** The first national preparatory study on the extent of homelessness was carried out in 2010 for the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs. It evaluated indicators for all ETHOS categories and sought to estimate the extent of homelessness from secondary sources. The study made recommendations on future data collection methods. |
| **Spain** | Some links between research and policy-making. | No clear allocation of responsibility for data management. | The definition used by the national statistics institute includes people living rough, in emergency accommodation, people staying in long-stay group accommodation (non-emergency centres, shelters for victims of domestic violence, centres for asylum seekers or irregular migrants), people living in buildings that would commonly be considered unsuitable for human habitation, people living in temporary accommodation such as boarding houses or guesthouses and people living in squats. | Lack of strategic goals at national level. | **Some data but with important gaps.** The Spanish National Statistics Institute carries out two surveys on homelessness: one focusing on the homeless population (EPSH-*Personas* survey) which was last carried out in 2005 and one focusing on the homeless service sector (EPSH *Centros* Survey) which was last carried out in 2011. There are various surveys and registers at regional and local level. For example, in Barcelona, the Network of Homeless Care (*Xarxa d´atenció a persones sense llar*) carries out a survey of homelessness on the 8th of November, collecting data on a range of ETHOS categories. |

| Country | Links between research and policy-making | Responsibility for data management | Operational definition of homelessness for data collection | Link between strategic goals and data collection | Remarks on overall extent of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sweden** | Relatively well-developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility to the National Board of Health and Welfare. | The national survey covers people living in public space/outdoors, people living in tents, staying in shelters, people staying in homeless hostels and in hotels due to homelessness, staying in temporary accommodation, transitional accommodation, women's shelters, people due to be released from a non-correctional institution within three months, people due to be released from a correctional institution within 3 months, people staying involuntarily with family and friends, people in long-term supported housing and people in municipal housing. | Well-linked. However, the national expert points out there could be more strategic use of operational targets and better coordination of different levels of monitoring towards broad strategic goals. | **Relatively extensive data.** There is a national survey carried out by the National Board of Health and Welfare every five years over one week in May. In several large cities, this collection takes place more frequently. |
| **UK** | Relatively well-developed links. | Clear allocation of responsibility within each of the devolved administrations. | Data is collected by local authorities on applications and acceptances for assistance under homelessness legislation. The legislation defines homelessness broadly as an absence of housing that is suitable for habitation. In most of the UK, eligibility for assistance depends on meeting specific criteria of 'priority need'. Scotland abolished the distinction between 'priority' and 'non-priority' in 2012. | Well-linked. | **Relatively extensive data.** Local authorities throughout the UK have a duty to collect data on statutory homelessness acceptances and applications. In England and Wales, local authorities have to submit counts and estimates of rough sleeping. In London, the CHAIN database tracks rough sleepers contacted by outreach teams. In Scotland, national rough sleeper counts are no longer carried out, but local authorities in Scotland collect more detailed information from people applying for homelessness assistance, including whether they have been roofless in the past 3 months. Local authorities also report on statutory homeless households placed in temporary accommodation. |

There is an important relationship between the extent to which polices are underpinned by evidence and the clarity of their strategic goals. Those countries/regions whose policies are most evidence-informed are generally those where there is a clear homeless strategy and clear responsibility for monitoring and data collection to evaluate progress. These countries include Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the UK. Some countries successfully use specific target indicators to monitor policy implementation and outcomes. In most cases, successful, integrated homelessness strategies provide clear targets which are monitored against action by local authorities responsible for implementation.

In order to make progress towards reducing homelessness, it is necessary to develop homeless data collection systems and make the best use of available data in order to determine strategic goals and measure progress. This involves clear responsibility for data management laid out in the homeless policy framework. This is the case in the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Ireland, Finland and Denmark. Strengthening data collection necessitates a clear operational definition of homelessness for this purpose and a clear vision of what data is required in line with policy objectives. In Italy, the results of the first national survey of homelessness represent an opportunity to develop more strategic policy-planning based on evidence. The key challenge in this respect is policy and strategy implementation, especially in the context of austerity.

As the table indicates, no country in the EU has truly comprehensive data on homelessness. Even in countries where data and research on homelessness are relatively extensive, there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of accounting for the flow of homeless people. It is clear that data collection is progressing, albeit at differing rates, in most countries. Collecting adequate data for policy purposes is likely to require combining different tools such as point-in-time surveys and register systems in order to account for stock and flow. It necessitates defining the variables on which data needs to be collected. For example, in order to monitor progress towards the reduction of long-term homelessness or the amount of time people spend homeless, it is necessary to collect data on the length of time that people remain homeless, which means collecting flow data. Busch-Geertsema and Edgar have defined core variables for homeless information systems, which are included in the annex to this report. Those countries with less extensive data should endeavor to make progress towards accounting for these variables. The outcomes of the MPHASIS project are valuable in this respect. For some countries, it may be necessary to increase the frequency with which data is collected in order to generate more frequent input for policy processes. In France, for example, the ten year census is considered by many stakeholders to be too infrequent to support strategic planning.

Some countries that have relatively rich data could better link this to strategic planning and to monitoring progress towards policy goals. For example, in Sweden, the national expert reported that although there is quite comprehensive data collected through the national survey, it is not straightforward to use this data to monitor progress towards the 4 goals laid out in the strategy: everyone to be guaranteed a roof over their head; number of people discharged from institutions without housing options to be reduced; permanent housing to be facilitated for people in the "staircase" support system; number of evictions should be reduced and eviction of children to be eliminated. This is because there is no obligation on the municipalities to define measurable operational targets towards these goals. Additionally, the methodology for the national survey has been refined so that data is not comparable between 2005 and 2010. There is also inadequate harmonisation of data held by different authorities in order really to evaluate progress towards these goals. Strengthening the link between data collection and monitoring progress towards policy objectives requires the elaboration of clear, measurable goals at operational level with pragmatic timeframes.

There are increasing calls for comparative, quantitative data on homelessness in Europe driven by policy and research needs, but also driven by the EU political agenda. The need for EU statistics on homelessness has been expressed by various stakeholders. FEANTSA therefore continues to endorse the call of the jury of the European Consensus Conference for the development of a retrospective module on homelessness in the EU SILC data collection. FEANTSA also calls on national authorities to build on the experiences of the 2011 census to strengthen national homeless information systems.

### *2.2.3 The Housing-Led Approach and Targeted Prevention: Key Thematic Priorities for Homeless Policies in Europe*

The following section focuses on two thematic priorities within homeless policies: the housing-led approach and targeted prevention of homelessness. These two priorities have emerged as central to homeless policy development within Europe and beyond in recent years. Whilst there is great diversity in the extent to which each has been developed, they are increasingly influential in policy discourse and practice at all levels. Most homeless interventions in Europe focus on homeless people's most urgent and basic needs. Yet, there is growing consensus that homeless policies and services should go beyond this and meet the needs of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in a more comprehensive fashion. Increasingly, contemporary homeless services and policies focus on prevention and on ensuring that homeless people can quickly access and, if necessary, be supported to maintain, permanent housing.[63] These approaches imply averting and/or minimising the human, social and economic costs of homelessness. There is growing evidence in particular that housing homeless people as quickly as possible results in positive outcomes and is more cost-effective in terms of public spending.[64] The same logic holds for preventative measures, although it can be more difficult to measure their cost effectiveness precisely. Prevention and housing-led approaches to homelessness reflect a broader shift towards the "normalisation" of the living conditions of people experiencing homelessness. This represents a break with the dominant policy and service paradigm, which has been orientated around supporting homeless people within a separate "homeless system" until such a time as they are ready or able to be integrated into society. It is important to emphasise that, although this chapter does not address emergency and temporary accommodation, these remain critically important elements of homelessness strategies. The aim here is to look at the extent to which Member States' policies ***go beyond*** these forms of provision but not to undermine their fundamental importance in meeting the basic needs of people facing acute situations of housing need.

#### Housing-Led Approaches to Homelessness

The Jury for the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness recommended that 'housing-led' approaches were the most effective solution to homelessness. The terms 'housing-led' and 'Housing First' describe homeless services which place homeless people in permanent, independent housing as quickly as possible. They contrast with the 'continuum of care' or 'staircase of transition' approach, which is the predominant model for homeless services in Europe, and which is based on the assumption that homeless people need to go through a phased rehabilitation process in order to be successfully re-housed. Benjaminsen and Dyb (2008) distinguish between three types of homelessness intervention. Housing-led approaches are situated within the 'normalising' model in their typology.

**Table 2.9 Three Models of Homelessness Intervention**

| | The normalising model | The tiered model | Staircase of transition |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Measure** | Moving into independent living in one's own dwelling. | Independent living after an intermediate phase from hostel or similar establishment to independent living. | Hierarchy/staircase of lodging and dwellings ; independent living for those who qualify. |
| **Method** | Individually designed support. | Tiers of intervention during a settled intermediate phase before independent living. | Differentiated system of sanctions based on withdrawal and expansion of rights and goods |
| **Ideology** | Homeless persons have the same needs as other people, but some need support to obtain a 'life quality' | A negative circle is to be broken through gradual adaption to independent living. | Homeless persons need to learn to live independently and not all will succeed. |

Source: Benjaminsen and Dyb (2008)

63 Benjaminsen, L., Dyb, E. and O'Sullivan, E. (2009) The Governance of Homelessness in Liberal and Social Democratic Welfare Regimes: National Strategies and Models of Intervention, *European Journal of Homelessness* 3, pp.27–55

64 Pleace, N (2012) *Housing First*, DIHAL

The "Housing First" model was developed in the USA, most famously by the organisation Pathways to Housing in New York. Pathways works with people who have spent long periods living rough and in homeless shelters, and are characterised by severe mental illness and/or problematic drug and alcohol use. Pathways secures apartments on the private rental market and provides an intensive, flexible support package of Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and Intensive Case Management (ICT) to facilitate independent living in a way that is consistent with the person's individual choices and preferences. A series of evaluations demonstrating that Housing First can deliver more positive outcomes for homeless people, and that it can be cost-effective in comparison with more traditional approaches, have made it very influential in Europe. The jury of the Consensus Conference selected the term housing-led in order to encompass all interventions that provide permanent housing solutions for homeless people quickly, in combination with support as required. In doing so, they sought to avoid a restrictive focus on the long-term homeless with complex needs and on the operational specificities of the Pathways model. Since 2010, the terms Housing First and housing-led have been increasingly used interchangeably in Europe and Housing First is not primarily understood as describing only the Pathways model. Pleace has distinguished between 3 types of Housing First model:[65]

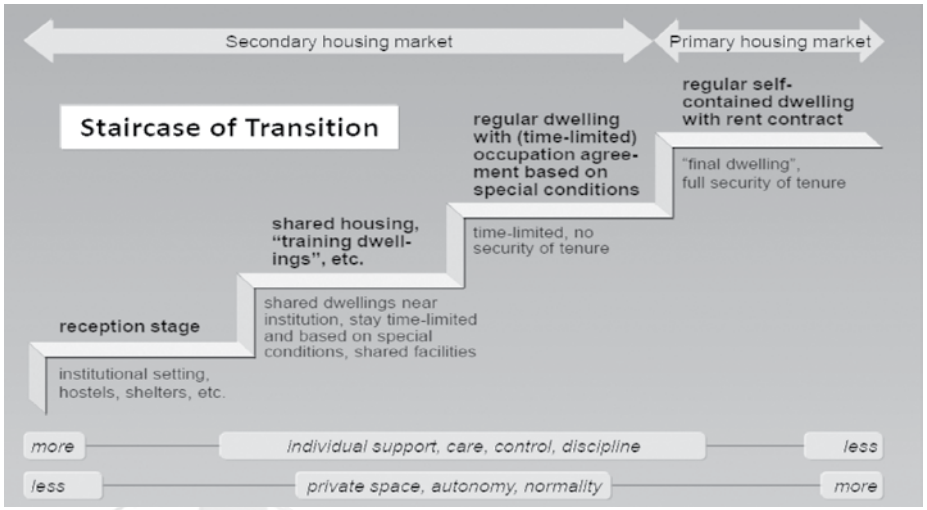
- Pathways Housing First : following the Pathways model.
- Communal Housing First: similar to the Pathways model but involving regrouped rather than scattered housing.
- Housing First Light: providing permanent housing as quickly as possible for all homeless people with a range of light housing-related support services.

Despite this diversity, there are some key principles which are common to all forms of Housing First model.

- Housing First involves immediate access to secure, permanent housing without following a preparatory process.
- Housing First 'separates' housing and support. This means that homeless people are immediately given secure housing with very few conditions attached, for example they are not required to enter psychiatric treatment or become abstinent from drugs and alcohol. Housing security is thus not dependent on engagement with treatment or rehabilitation programmes.
- Housing First services use a 'harm reduction' approach that attempts to stabilise and reduce mental health problems and problematic drug and alcohol use without imposing abstinence.
- Housing First services also have 'recovery orientation' that aims to encourage homeless people away from behaviour that is causing them harm.

The diagrams below provide an overview of the staircase approach and Housing First approach.

**Diagram 1.1 The Staircase Model of Homeless Intervention**

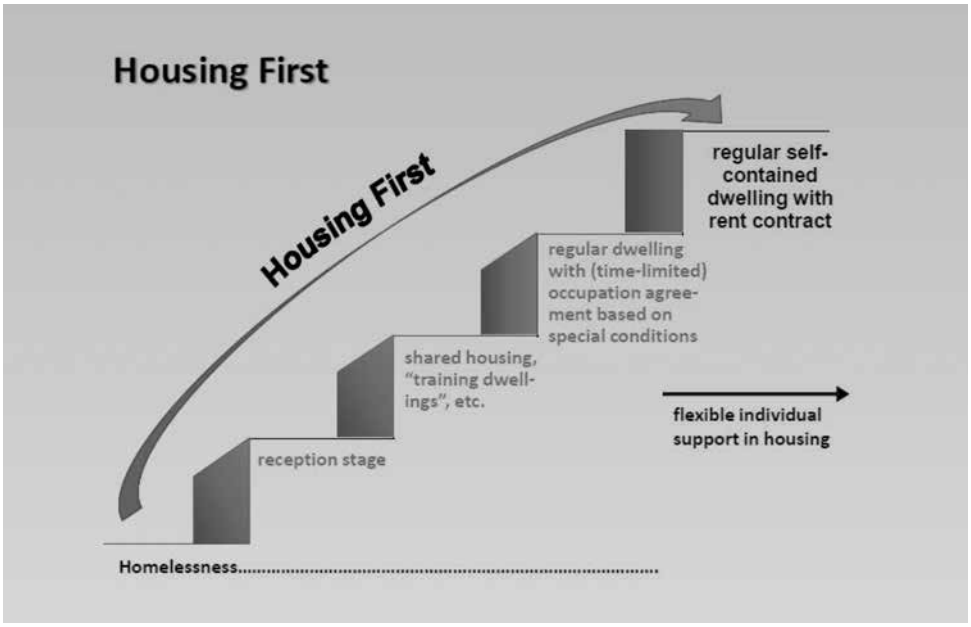



Source: Busch Geertsema 2012[66]

65 Ibid.

66 Volker Busch-Geertsema (2012) Keynote address *The Housing First approach in Europe*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and RMIT University Inaugural Homelessness Research Conference, Melbourne, 19–20 April 2012, available at: . http://www.ahuri.edu.au/downloads/2012_Events/HRC/ppt/HRC_Volker_Busch_Geertsema.pdf

**Diagram 1.2 The Housing First Model of Homeless Intervention**




Source: Busch Geertsema 2012

### Housing-Led Approaches in Europe

Due to the diversity of homeless policy contexts and approaches in Europe, housing-led services have evolved differently and over different time frames in different Member States. This chapter describes the extent to which housing-led approaches are currently developed in Europe. It is important to note that in some national contexts "housing-led" interventions developed without specific reference to the policy discourse and evidence about the effectiveness of Housing First. In other contexts, there has been more of a clear policy process of policy adaptation in light of the evidence and the policy discourse generated on Housing First. It is possible to identify four broad groups of Member States according to the extent that housing-led approaches have been developed.

- **Group 1:** Countries implementing a housing-led strategy where immediate access to housing with support as necessary becomes the dominant mode of service delivery (Finland, Denmark, Scotland);
- **Group 2:** Countries which have adopted a housing-led strategy in principle but where it is not yet an operational reality (Ireland, Portugal, France)
- **Group 3:** Countries where supported housing is widespread but where the transitional approach to service delivery remains central for at least some groups of homeless people (England, Northern Ireland, Wales, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany). In some of these contexts, such as in England, there has been a strong focus on shortening the "staircase" to permanent housing and making it more effective in helping people access and maintain permanent housing.
- **Group 4:** Countries where housing-led strategies are generally not widespread, although there may be some local initiatives (Austria, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic).

The remainder of this chapter examines the situation of Member States in each of these groups.

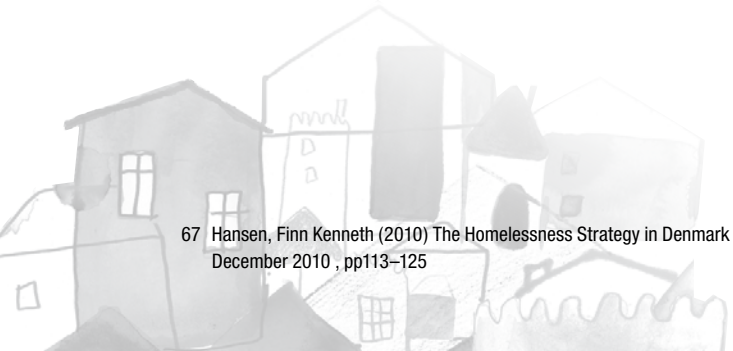
### *Group 1: Implementing a Housing-Led Strategy Where Immediate Access to Housing with Support as Necessary Becomes the Dominant Mode of Service Delivery*



Some European countries are quite advanced in the implementation of a housing-led or Housing First policy response to homelessness and orient their homeless policies towards the principle of quick/immediate access to permanent housing with support. Finland, for example, has adopted an explicitly Housing First approach to addressing long-term homelessness and has committed to the conversion of all shelters and dormitory-type hostels into supported housing. The implementation of this commitment is well advanced and the target of 1,250 new dwellings, supported-housing units or care places in the ten major cities was exceeded in the first phase of the homeless strategy. New provision involves both scattered-site housing with floating support and communal Housing First projects, where formerly homeless people are congregated in purpose-built/converted buildings with onsite support services. There is some debate as to which extent communal Housing First is in line with a "normalisation" approach and with the separation of housing and treatment implied by Housing First. In the new programming period, the aim is to maintain the number of communal Housing First dwellings at a maximum of one half of provision. Supported housing distributed throughout the social housing stock and accompanied by flexible, mobile support work will be re-enforced. Cities are encouraged to establish multidisciplinary teams for housing advisory services and home care, and to develop joint models for support work as well as organisation.

The Danish homelessness strategy adopts a Housing First approach. In the Danish context, promoting Housing First is not seen as a broad-based shift from shelter to housing solutions over the short term. The objective is more to reduce the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation. There is however a long-term expectation that demand for shelter accommodation should reduce over time. The current focus is on ensuring homeless people are offered their own home as soon as possible and that they have the right sort of support to maintain this. Housing is most often provided through the municipal right of assignment of social housing. There are also some specific types of "adapted" housing such as *skaeve huse*, which offer an alternative form of permanent, independent housing for people who do not wish to live in the community in mainstream social housing. There is a strong focus on developing floating support systems to deliver the homeless strategy in Denmark. Municipalities are encouraged to focus on assertive community treatment (ACT), critical time intervention (CTI) and individual case management.[67] The national strategy involves commitments from municipalities to provide new housing for homeless persons. Various types of housing will be constructed in the municipalities, and in some cases this housing will be targeted at groups with special needs such as substance users or young people. Unlike Finland, there are no plans to reduce or change the shelter infrastructure at present. In 2010, 28% of the people discharged from homeless accommodation moved into their own home.

Scotland is the most advanced part of the UK in terms of implementing a housing-led approach. The legislative framework is based around a duty on local authorities to house all unintentionally homeless households (not only those in priority need) in settled accommodation. In the 6 months from April to September 2011, social rented tenancies were offered to 10,494 households who had been found to be unintentionally homeless. Approximately 1,500 homeless households were offered a private rented tenancy. There has been a significant reduction in hostel spaces over recent years, and this reflects a general consensus that settled accommodation should be the main solution to homelessness as well as reduced demand as more people are able to access permanent housing solutions.



67 Hansen, Finn Kenneth (2010) The Homelessness Strategy in Denmark *European Journal of Homelessness: Homelessness, Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Volume 4, December 2010 , pp113–125

### *Group 2: Adopted a Housing-Led Strategy in Principle But Not Yet an Operational Reality*

Some countries have set out commitments to a housing-led or Housing First policy but are still working towards concrete plans for implementation. The housing-led approach is central to the French national strategy and France has established an enforceable right to housing. However, the actual implementation of a housing-led service system is not yet a reality. In order to generate more evidence about the Housing First approach, an ambitious social experimentation project is being carried out called *Un Chez-soi d'abord*. The project will test a Housing First intervention for homeless people with mental health problems in four cities to generate evidence about whether the approach should be scaled up. Whilst there is a broad consensus around the principle of Housing First in France, there is some frustration amongst stakeholders that budgets are not seen to have evolved in line with the ambition to reorganise services according to the Housing First principle. Coordination between central government and the local and regional authorities responsible for implementation is also described as limited. There is particular concern that the shelter system, which is already unable to cope with demand, will be contracted before adequate alternatives are in place. A key issue is a lack of accessible affordable housing to implement Housing First. Resources devoted to increasing the social housing stock have increased significantly since the first half of the 2000s. However, the increases have been lower than planned and the stock remains insufficient, especially in Ile-de-France. The objective for 2010 was to build 140,000 houses and 131,509 were built.[68] The national strategy involves a number of measures to improve the mobilisation of existing social housing stock for housing homeless people. A target has been established of mobilising an overall quota of 25% of the social housing in each department, which the state can allocate to homeless and poorly housed people, as well as to those recognised as in priority housing need by the law on the enforceable right to housing. The French strategy also sets some quantitative targets for establishing "*Maisons Relais*" (a form of group housing that combines individual and communal living areas with support). This approach has been criticised as not consistent with the "normalisation" approach of Housing First. According to the Court of Auditors evaluation of the national strategy, the offer of this type of housing remains insufficient and the rate of development is below the government's target. By the end of 2011, 7,313 places have been created as opposed to the target 150,000. A forthcoming methodological guide is planned to assist local and regional authorities in the concrete development of action plans for housing of disadvantaged people (*Plans d'Action pour le logement des personnes défavorisées*), which will be key tools for the implementation of the strategy. A new five-year strategy is currently being developed, which will lay out plans for future implementation.



Portugal's national strategy has put emphasis on housing as a key response to homelessness for the first time. It stresses that people should not stay in temporary accommodation for long periods and that permanent housing solutions should be found. Homelessness has traditionally been understood as a social issue, so this was an "important evolution in the definition of homelessness policies in Portugal, where housing has always been notably absent".[69] The strategy has promoted Housing First as an important intervention model. A Housing First project for 65 mentally ill homeless people has been developed in the city of Lisbon. A protocol was signed in 2009 between the Association for Research and Psychosocial Integration (AEIPS), the Higher Institute for Applied Psychology (ISPA), Pathways to Housing, the Social Security Institute of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Professor Marybeth Shinn of Vanderbilt University in the US. €75,000 of initial funding was provided, followed by €225,000 in 2011 and a further €423,159 in 2012. The programme has achieved excellent results (85 to 90% of residents have stayed in their homes since the project was launched). However, this funding will not be continued after 2012. Fortunately, the Lisbon City Council Social Emergency Fund shall provide AEIPS with some funding to continue the programme as of 2012. Another Housing First project targeting homeless women is currently being implemented by Almada City Council. As in France, there is a commitment to working towards a housing-led approach but scaling up the approach is less advanced in practice. The fact that the national strategy has not received high-level political backing or been allocated funding for implementation mean that a broad implementation of a housing-led service system is not currently possible.

Homeless policy in Ireland is working towards providing housing, with support as required, as the initial step in addressing all forms of homelessness. The 2011 Programme for Government and the June 2011 Housing Policy State-

68 Cour des Comptes (2011) *Rapport d'évaluation La Politique Publique de l'Hébergement des Personnes Sans-Domicile*

69 Baptista, Isabel (2009) The Drafting of the Portuguese Homeless Strategy: An Insight into the Process from a Governance-Oriented Perspective, *European Journal of Homelessness Governance and Homelessness*, Volume 3, December 2009, p.60.

ment highlighted the fact that a key priority was to "deliver more and better outcomes for vulnerable, disadvantaged and special-needs households through for example, the introduction of the 'Housing First' approach to homeless services". The 'Way Home' strategy focuses on permanent housing solutions and on minimising stays in temporary accommodation. The current phase of the strategy has made progress towards a housing-led approach but development of the housing offer/options for people who have previously been homeless remains a challenge. The capital funding programme for social housing in Ireland has been seriously reduced over the past three years. A switch to a leasing-based housing programme has not produced sufficient units to meet the scale of demand for social housing. A variety of mechanisms, including making more use of the private rental sector, and finding innovative ways to fund social housing are currently being explored. A Housing First pilot using scattered accommodation with floating support to house long-term rough sleepers is being carried out in Dublin. An evaluation of the project will produce a report reviewing the first 12 months of the project which will make recommendations regarding the potential application of this model in the Dublin region and nationally.

### *Group 3: Supported Housing is Widespread but the Transitional Approach to Service Delivery Remains Central for at Least Some Groups of Homeless People*

In Germany, supported housing is well developed and has been an important mode of service delivery since the 1990s. There is a well-developed offer of "support in housing" services for formerly homeless people, and for those who have faced a housing crisis at some stage. A survey on supported housing, organised by service providers for homeless people, reported almost 5,800 formerly homeless people were receiving "support in housing" from 261 different service providers on a single day in 2003. However, about 47 per cent of the housing provided was time-limited including 20 per cent in shared accommodation.[70] Approximately half of the service users were in regular dwellings with full tenancy rights. So, while there is an emphasis on getting people into housing, the elements of permanence and unconditionally which are essential to the Housing First approach are not as widely implemented. Nonetheless, there are local examples of projects that adopt a Housing First approach. More evidence is needed to understand how successfully people move on from transitional programmes to permanent housing.

Similarly, the provision of floating support in housing is very much mainstream in the UK. Pleace has summarised the development of "Housing-First light" services in this context. He uses the term to describe a broad range of services, some of which have been developed with reference to Housing First and some wholly independently of the model. All are forms of low-intensity support provided to formerly homeless people in mainstream housing. These services were first developed to resettle people who had been long-term residents of large dormitory homelessness services.[71] They were then adopted by social housing providers as housing management tools to counteract rent arrears, nuisance behavior and abandonment of housing by 'vulnerable' formerly homeless people.[72] This type of service then began to replace the use of emergency accommodation for homeless people with high levels of need, using immediate access to housing with low intensity mobile support. Eventually the allocation of both social and private rented housing, with light support, became the single most common form of homeless service in the UK.[73]

Johnson and Teixeira have evaluated the extent to which Housing First is being implemented in the UK. They conclude that although the provision of supported housing is mainstream, there is still a prevailing philosophy of "treatment first".[74] Many people still pass through temporary accommodation, particularly single homeless people who (apart from in Scotland) are often ineligible for "priority need" and who the local authority do not have a statutory duty to house. In England, a lot of investment has been made to improve the efficiency of hostels and ensure that they are "places of change" from which people move onto permanent solutions. This is a different approach to that of

70 Busch-Geertsema, V. and Evers, J. (2004) *Auf dem Weg zur Normalität. Bestandsaufnahme der persönlichen Hilfen in Wohnungen im Bereich der Hilfen in Wohnungsnotfällen [On the Way to Normality. Stock Taking of Support in Housing for People in Urgent Need of Housing]*. (Bremen: GISS)

71 Dant, T and Deacon, A (1989) *Hostels to Homes? The Rehousing of Single Homeless People* Aldershot: Avebury

72 Pleace, N. (1995) *Housing Single Vulnerable Homeless People* York: University of York , available at: http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/publications/PDF/pleace.pdf

73 Pleace, N. and Quilgars, D. (2003) *Supporting People: Guide to Accommodation and Support Options for Homeless Households* London: Homelessness Directorate; Johnsen. S. and Teixeira, L. (2010) op cit.

74 Johnsen, S. and Teixeira, L (2010*) Staircases, Elevators and Cycles of Change: Housing First and Other Housing Models for People with Complex Support Needs* (London: Crisis) and Johnsen, S. and Teixeira, L (2012). 'Doing it Already'?: Stakeholders Perceptions of 'Housing First' in the UK, *International Journal of Housing Policy* (2012, 12 (2))

Housing First, as it centres on re-enforcing the effectiveness of transitional services rather than replacing them with immediate access to permanent housing. There may however be growing interest in Housing First as a cost-effective intervention in the framework of England's latest strategy. Ten local authorities in England are testing a range of "Payment by Results" models in relation to housing-related support services. The Welsh national strategy focuses on facilitating move-on to settled housing from temporary accommodation. One of the aims of the strategy is that "No-one should remain in unsettled temporary accommodation for prolonged periods of time purely because they are unable to gain access to more stable, longer-term accommodation". Similarly, in Northern Ireland, the strategy aims to reduce the length of time that households experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing. The current Northern Irish strategy commits to a fundamental review of the temporary accommodation portfolio with regard to its strategic relevance, financial viability and access criteria and an examination the applicability of the housing-led model.

The situation in Sweden involves a very developed secondary housing market, whereby homeless service providers sublet to tenants via semi-contracts. There are approximately 13,900 people living in transitional situations under this type of semi-contract. The national expert for Sweden reports that permanent housing with a mainstream contract is still mostly understood to be the final stage in the reintegration process, and that the national strategy has mostly focused on reinforcing the staircase model as a means to achieve this end result. There is however a substantial critique of the effectiveness of the system in moving people onto permanent solutions.[75] For several years, knowledge, understanding and interest in the Housing First model have been spreading within Sweden. There are some local projects but it is too early to talk of a shift away from the staircase approach. This year, a national conference was organised on Housing First.

In the Netherlands, some cities and regions are implementing Housing First services. One example is the DISCUS Housing First project in Amsterdam, which has been evaluated and shown to achieve positive outcomes with the majority (77%) of clients remaining stably housed after five and a half years and high levels of client satisfaction. More generally, *Federatie Opvang*'s 2010 report on the homeless sector shows that there has been a substantial shift from overnight and crisis shelter to supported housing over the past five years. Allocation procedures in social housing mean that people leaving shelter are prioritised for social housing.

### *Group 4: Housing-Led Strategies Are Generally Not Widespread, Although There May Be Some Local Initiatives*

In Austria, Belgium and Spain, there are local efforts to develop and test Housing First approaches, although they remain a small minority of provision. In Austria, the cities of Vienna and Salzburg have developed Housing First schemes. Housing First pilots are currently being developed in Brussels. In Spain, there are some housing-led initiatives at local and regional level. For example, in Catalonia, the programme *Xarxa d'Habitages d'Inclusió* provides supported housing for people moving on from homelessness. Evidence from regional surveys shows that the general supported housing offer is expanding in the region.

Greece has not developed housing-led solutions to homelessness. In general, the homeless service system is underdeveloped and a number of recent developments make it even harder for people facing homelessness or housing exclusion to access housing. The social housing organisation has been abolished as a result of cuts in response to the crisis, as has housing benefit.

In general, housing-led approaches are not well developed in Central and Eastern Europe. Temporary accommodation remains the predominant solution to homelessness and, in many instances, the system is in a phase of expansion. In Hungary, there is a freeze on financing for hostels but there is an ad-hoc seasonal expansion of the sector when it is necessary to stop homeless people freezing outside. Frequently, homelessness is framed as a social issue and there is a lack of involvement of public authorities responsible for housing in addressing homelessness. There is a very limited supply of social housing to support the implementation of housing-led approaches, and with high levels of demand allocations usually prioritise other vulnerable groups. Some countries such as Lithuania have developed overall strategies to increase and improve the social housing stock.

There are some long-term supported housing initiatives in place in Central and Eastern Europe but they are usu-

75 Sahlin, I. (2005) "The Staircase of Transition : Survival through Failure". Innovation, European Journal of Social Research, Vol. 18, No 2, 115-135

ally isolated initiatives. In Hungary, there are about 800 formerly homeless people living in the private rental sector with some form of support. This mostly concerns projects funded under the European Social Fund that combine housing, employment and training elements. There are about 22 such projects throughout the country. In Budapest, there is an experimental Housing First-type project called the Pilis Forest Project which offers housing with support to rough sleepers. The projects tend to be of limited duration and when they expire, some of the beneficiaries return to homelessness. In Poland, a new Regulation on Sheltered Housing was adopted in March 2012. This defines sheltered housing, the conditions of access as well as the technical standards for the units. A range of support can be provided to people in sheltered housing including social work and specialist counselling. Homeless people are not a specific target group but the regulation defines a range of categories of vulnerable people that need support for daily living. As the regulation is very new, it is difficult to assess how useful this form of provision will be in providing housing solutions for homeless people. There is a risk, that as with social housing, it will be difficult for homeless people to access because homelessness is not a specific allocation criterion and there is high demand from other priority categories. Two municipalities in Poland have developed plans to test the Housing First approach, targeting individuals who have not benefited from the traditional homeless support system and offering them immediate access to housing with support from a social worker. These programmes were to start in summer 2012. In Slovenia, the organisation Kings of the Street has been running a programme of time-limited, individualised housing support for long-term homeless people in Ljubljana since July 2008. This is the first supported-housing service for homeless people in Slovenia. Flats are rented by the NGO on the private rental market. Rents are the single biggest cost of the project. Kings of the Street also started a project in 2012 in partnership with the municipality of Ljubljana. The aim is to mobilise municipal housing to house homeless people. Kings of the Street offers a support package to people re-housed in this way.

Work is taking place at European level to enhance knowledge and understanding of Housing First in Europe. The social experimentation programme 'Housing First Europe' is currently evaluating housing first projects in five European cities: Lisbon, Budapest, Glasgow, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. In FEANTSA's view, all homelessness policies should be orientated towards normalising the living conditions of homeless people and supporting them to access and maintain long-term housing in the most effective way possible. European-level policy support and coordination should facilitate the implementation of housing-led approaches in Member States.

### Targeted Prevention

Prevention of homelessness is an important element of all of the integrated homelessness strategies in place in Europe. Preventative measures are also well established in a number of countries where there is no integrated homelessness strategy. There are several levels at which homelessness can be prevented.[76] The risk of homelessness amongst the general population can be reduced through measures such as general housing policy (supply, access and affordability), and the overall welfare context in terms of income benefits, housing benefits, employment protection etc. Targeted prevention focuses on those at immediate risk of homelessness, such as those leaving institutions and facing eviction. Here we explore the role of targeted prevention as a key component of homeless policies in Europe. Targeted prevention is a specific feature of homeless policies, where as more general measures in social policy, housing and welfare tend to be beyond the scope of homeless policies per se. Furthermore, there is evidence that targeted prevention can help reduce homelessness even in the context of unhelpful structural trends.[77]

### Prevention of Evictions

Eviction from rental housing is a key trigger for homelessness. Many homeless policies therefore include measures to limit this pathway into homelessness. Of those countries with an integrated strategy, most focus to some extent on early intervention in eviction procedures. Evictions are also a major priority in several countries where there is no integrated strategy but where there are established policy frameworks and extensive services, particularly in Austria and Germany. The countries where there are less robust policy frameworks for addressing homelessness may have some measures to protect tenants facing eviction at local level, or general legal provisions but fewer specific service interventions.

Several countries have developed specific information and cooperation systems for early intervention in the eviction

76 Volker Busch-Geertsema & Suzanne Fitzpatrick (2008) 'Effective Homelessness Prevention? Explaining Reductions in Homelessness in Germany and England', *European Journal of Homelessness Effectiveness of Policies and Services for Homelessness, Volume 2, December 2008*

77 Ibid

process. These centre on sharing information and cooperation between relevant agencies, as well as the provision of financial assistance. For example, in the framework of implementing the Dutch homelessness strategy, most cities have established agreements between the city administration, housing corporations, homeless service providers and debt assistance agencies to in order to promote joint working to prevent evictions. The reduction of evictions is one of the objectives of the strategy and one of the indicators on which cities have to report under their City Compass/Strategic Relief Plans. In Amsterdam, for example, early outreach services have been introduced. Eleven housing corporations have agreed to inform service providers about tenants at risk of eviction. Landlords report households with two months' rent arrears to the service providers. In response, a home visit is conducted by a social worker, in cooperation with a financial worker, to explore the social and financial situation and offer assistance, including debt regulation and support with budgeting. The city has thus been able to achieve the objective of reducing evictions in social housing to 70% of their 2005 level in the period 2005-06.[78] Nationally, the umbrella of social housing providers, Aedes, reports that there has been a steady reduction in eviction levels in the past few years, from 5,956 in 2006 to 4,616 in 2010. In Belgium, there is a federal law on the "humanising of judicial eviction". Municipal social services (OCMW/CPAS) have to be informed of all eviction procedures in order that they can provide support. The court informs the OCMW/CPAS when landlords request an eviction. Clients that are already known to the services are contacted directly by a social worker. Unknown clients receive a letter and invitation to come the service for a first meeting. Similar early warning systems have been developed in Germany and in Austria. In Germany, municipal authorities have a legal obligation to assume rent arrears when a household is faced with imminent eviction. Since the 1980s, there has been a concerted and successful effort to develop effective administrative structures which facilitate earlier and more pro-active interventions when a household faces eviction due to arrears. Most municipalities run such programmes. In Vienna, the Secure Tenancy Centre FAWOS is responsible for preventing eviction through similar advice and financial assistance measures. Since 2000 a system has been in place whereby the local courts inform FAWOS automatically at the beginning of an eviction procedure. FAWOS is then able to contact the tenants concerned and offer legal and budgeting advice, mediation with landlords, assistance in drawing up a repayment plan and financial aid. In Scotland, social and private landlords and mortgage lenders must inform the local authority when they are taking action to repossess a property. This enables the local authority to offer advice and assistance to the affected household prior to eviction action, to facilitate negotiation and, if necessary, to prepare to meet the housing needs of the household before they become homeless. There is also a new legal provision in Scotland called a 'pre-action requirement'. Before an eviction is granted by the court, evidence must be presented that the affected household has been offered independent advice and reasonable steps have been taken to avoid eviction.

In the framework of the French national strategy, a number of recommendations have been made by central government regarding the prevention of evictions. This includes the implementation in all departments of the CCAPEX (Coordination Commissions for the prevention of evictions). The implementation of this instrument at local level has hitherto been too partial and insufficient to demonstrate an impact. NGO service providers consider that the national strategy is being inadequately implemented as far as evictions are concerned. There remains a lack of clear statistical evidence relating to actual evictions rather than the risk of eviction.

Housing advice services play an important role in prevention of evictions. In Ireland, there are a number of agencies that can assist tenants, both in social housing and private rental accommodation, and advise them on their tenancy rights and procedures to take if an eviction notice is received. There are preventative measures outlined in the 'The Way Home' strategy. These include the provision of housing advice and advocacy to address causes of eviction and/or ensure ease of movement to alternative accommodation. The national expert points out that a lack of data on tenancies threatened with eviction, with little information available on tenancies which are under a notice of termination or a notice to quit, is a challenge for agencies providing preventative services in relation to eviction. The current Finnish homeless strategy also involves strengthening housing advice services. Under the first phase of the strategy, new service concepts have been developed and 14 new housing advisors have been hired in Helsinki. The Danish ex-

78 Hermans, Koen (2010), *Discussion Paper Peer Review on Homelessness Policies in Amsterdam City*, Netherlands, HABITACT, available at http://www.habitact.eu/files/activity/peerreview/_discussionpaper_amsterdam2010.pdf

pert highlighted that measures to combat evictions through advice in Denmark are often insufficiently implemented because of the time pressure faced by social workers and because of inadequate training and knowledge on the legal framework. Since 2002, the number of cases where people are evicted from their apartments has increased steadily in Denmark. In 2002 there were 1,500 evictions, in 2006 this increased to 2,500 and in 2009 the number of 4,000 evictions was reached. The studies performed on the reasons for the evictions show that the people evicted are predominantly persons and families with low income who have major debt and who use a relatively large part of their income on rent.

Greece has introduced new legal measures to cope with the large rise in evictions in the context of the crisis. A new provision allows tenants who can prove that their incomes have undergone drastic cuts to renegotiate their rent, with recourse to a court procedure if agreement cannot be reached with the landlord. The Deputy Minister of Health announced proposals that would allow evictions to be suspended for six months in the case that the tenant had recently been made redundant.

In Sweden, the national strategy sets a specific objective of reducing evictions and bringing the level of eviction amongst families with children down to zero. There has been some progress in reducing levels.

In Italy, legislation was introduced at the end of 2011 which extends a "freeze" on the enforcement of evictions under specific circumstances until 2012. This applies only to households who are facing eviction because the lease period has expired, who have an income of less that €27,000 and who live in municipalities of more than 10,000 people. It does not apply in cases of rent arrears. Whilst the measure provides temporary relief for some households, it does not provide any long-term solutions.

In Central and Eastern Europe, measures to prevent evictions are underdeveloped. In the Czech Republic, there are no specific procedures to stop people facing eviction becoming homeless, apart for some limited protection for families with children being evicted from council housing. The situation is similar in Slovenia. In Hungary, some local authorities run debt-management services for families facing arrears. There is a legal duty to provide these service in settlements with a population over forty thousand, as well as in the districts of Budapest. In Poland, new legislation was introduced in 2005 to prevent evictions to the street, a situation which was extremely common in the 1990s. Unless the court grants the tenant the right to accommodation in social housing, the bailiff has to suspend the eviction until the owner, tenant or municipality secures a temporary accommodation solution. If this falls to the municipality and they are not able to provide temporary accommodation within 6 months, or in cases of domestic violence or anti social behaviour, the tenant can be housed in a night shelter or homeless hostel (as of 2011). FEANTSA members raise concerns that this legislation may actually serve to increase homelessness as municipalities are not resourced to provide temporary accommodation and are therefore obliged to push people into homelessness. Whilst there are no national early intervention strategies in Poland, some municipalities take preventive measures and implement local systems against evictions, based on cooperation between the social welfare services and the housing sector, and systems for working off debt as well as educational campaigns. In Romania, there is an insurance fund for sitting tenants who are about to be evicted or having been evicted from their homes because they have been returned to the former owners in the transition from communism. This group also has a right to access social housing as a means of solving their housing situation, along with a range of other 'priority need' categories. However, the supply of social housing is highly inadequate, meaning that this right is often not implemented.

As referred to in the discussion under the changing profile of homelessness in Europe, eviction of homeowners following foreclosure proceedings is a growing concern in some countries. The problem is most pronounced in Spain, although it is also an issue in Greece and Portugal. Specific measures to support homeowners facing arrears or foreclosures have been introduced in the UK, Greece, Ireland and Spain. These include guidance and obligations for lenders, such as a code of conduct established in Spain or the obligation to inform local authorities in the case of repossession in Scotland, as well as specific interventions to support lenders e.g. the mortgage-to-rent scheme and Mortgage Interest Supplement that have been introduced in Ireland and the Mortgage Rescue scheme and Preventing Repos-

session Funding in England. In Greece, foreclosures have been temporarily suspended in cases where the household has no other housing and no longer has the means to repay the loan. In Hungary, the former annual eviction moratorium which ran from 1st December to 1st March was abolished and replaced by a quota system to protect mortgage holders threatened by eviction in 2011. It is especially holders of foreign currency mortgages that are at risk. The law sets quotas for the real estate that can be sold at auction until 2015. It protects only those who have fallen behind on foreign currency mortgage payments and excludes many others at risk of homelessness. A range of further measures have been introduced to protect holders of foreign currency mortgages, including a final pay off at a fixed exchange rate, a fixed exchange rate for 60 months for those unable to pay off, and the establishment of a national asset management authority which would allow former owners to stay in their property as tenants.

**Discharge from Institutions**

Discharge from institutions (e.g. hospitals, prisons, state child care, treatment centres) is an important pathway into homelessness. Most integrated homelessness strategies include some specific focus on this question, with guidance or standards to attempt to assure coordination between institutions and housing and support services.

The Nordic countries are fairly advanced on the issue of discharge from institutions. In Finland, young people who have been taken into custody are the only group of people who have a subjective right to housing. People living in institutions and prisons belong to the target group in the present programme to reduce long-term homelessness. In Sweden, the former strategy included a strategic objective on reducing homelessness as a result of discharge from prison or treatment institutes. The national expert pointed out that one limitation is that the municipalities had a lot of freedom as to how and to what extent they implemented concrete measures towards this goal. The Danish homeless strategy includes the strategic goal that release from prison and discharge from hospital/courses of treatment must presuppose that an accommodation solution is in place. A model called 'Good Release' has been developed, which defines steps required from admission to release or discharge. A model or roadmap must be created for the way in which collaboration between prisons, treatment centres, hospitals and the municipalities can be strengthened in order to ensure coherence in the actions taken during the transition from prison/treatment to settled housing. Critical Time Intervention (CTI) is used to offer support during the transition to housing. Homelessness statistics in Denmark suggest that the programme is working. The national homeless survey collects data on those in hospital and prison who are due to be discharged in one month and do not have accommodation to go to. In week 6 of 2007, 129 people were in this situation in prison and 223 in hospital. By 2011, these figures had fallen to 88 and 173 respectively.

All of the UK strategies include focus on the question of institutional release:

- The Welsh Assembly Government launched a programme called Prison Link Cymru (PLC) in 2004. Operational in all local authorities, the service offers assistance to prisoners who anticipate being homeless upon release.

- The English strategy puts forward a range of measures in relation to prisoners, including ensuring that benefit payments covering housing expenses are maintained during short sentences and commissioning guidance for prison and probation services on improving offender access to private rented sector accommodation. It also focuses on hospital admission and discharge, detailing plans for the national homeless service umbrella organisation to produce guidance for health practitioners. A recent report showed that discharge from hospital to the street remains a significant problem in England.[79] Research also shows that young people with experience of care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.[80] In order to improve this situation, the strategy encourages local authorities to implement a model called the "positive youth accommodation pathway" for young people leaving care or unable to stay with their families.

- In Scotland, Health and Homelessness Standards have been introduced to ensure that no-one is discharged from hospital to homelessness. Projects have been set up in prisons to assist prisoners with re-housing, although prison authorities have not taken full responsibility to ensure that no-one leaves prison to homelessness. There is also national guidance concerning young people leaving the care system which states that no-one in this situation should become homeless.

79 Homeless Link/St Mungo's (2012) *Improving Hospital Discharge for Homeless People: Analysis of the Current Picture and Recommendations for Change*, available at: http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attached-downloads/HOSPITAL_ADMISSION_AND_DISCHARGE._REPORTdoc.pdf

80 Fitzpatrick, Suzanne, Bramley, Glen & Johnsen Sarah (2012), *Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: Briefing Paper No. 1, available at: http://www.sbe.hw.ac.uk/documents/MEH_Briefing_No_1_2012.pdf*

- In Northern Ireland, there is a commitment for pre-release housing advice, including tenancy sustainment to be fully available by 2013/14 at all prisons and detention centres. In 2010, a Strategic Regional Reference Group on "Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of Young People Aged 16 and 17 who are Leaving Care or Homeless" was formed. This group, co-chaired by the Regional Health and Social Care Board and the Housing Executive, comprises representatives from the health, housing and voluntary sectors and aims to drive and inform integrated service-planning to meet the accommodation and support needs of these young people.

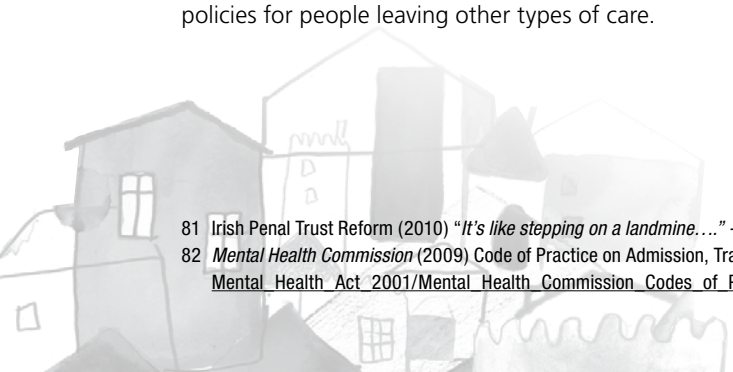
In Ireland, one of the measures included in '*The Way Home*' strategy is the establishment of discharge policies and practices with relevant bodies, including prisons, hospitals, and childcare services in order to identify housing and follow up supports through close links between institutions and housing providers and community-based services. Despite the guidance, there is an implementation gap between policy and practice with people falling through the net. A study carried out by the Irish Penal Reform Trust found that the Irish Prison Service aims not to release anyone without an address, and implements preventative measures such as payment of 13 weeks rent in private accommodation following short sentences. However, release without an address continues, either because prisoners do not disclose their lack of address or because of poor coordination between agencies.[81] A code of good practice exists on admission, transfer and discharge from hospital for people with mental health problems.[82] If necessary, the hospital should find suitable accommodations where a patient can stay after they are discharged. The patient should be assigned a key worker to work with social, housing and homeless organisations if they are homeless.

In the Netherlands, there is a specific focus on prison leavers. Social workers are active in every prison with the specific task of ensuring that every person leaving detention has ID, health insurance, a house, income from social benefits or work. One of the indicators for the City Compasses/ Social Relief Plans is to reduce the number of people who become homeless after detention. There are no specific policies for people leaving other types of care.

In France, the national strategy lays out plans to prevent discharge to homelessness amongst vulnerable populations, such as prison leavers. So far, concrete action to implement this has been limited. A letter was sent by the Minister of Justice to all prison services in December 2009 to inform them of their role as partners in delivering the "national priority" on homelessness. Another letter was sent to regional authorities regarding the prevention of homelessness upon release from prison in 2010. Regarding people leaving hospital, there are no concrete policy measures, although various NGO-run services work on this issue. There is a lack of data about these target groups. Of particular concern is the situation of young people leaving care. This is a competence of the *départements* who have introduced budget cuts in the context of the crisis, meaning that follow-up care is becoming increasingly limited. Homeless accommodation providers perceive a growing number of young people leaving care appearing in their services, although there has not yet been any concrete research into this.

In Eastern Europe, the link between institutional release and homelessness is only addressed to a limited extent by current policy frameworks. In Romania, according to the law 272/2004 on Child protection, a variety of measures exist to support vulnerable young people leaving institutions. This includes follow-up care and the payment of rent for up to three years to support independent living. In practice, it tends to mean that people stay in the institutions until they have passed the upper age limit to access such support. In the Czech Republic, there are no specific provisions to prevent homelessness as a result of institutional release. Homeless service providers provide ad-hoc interventions based on local conditions. The same is true in Slovenia, Hungary and Lithuania. In Poland, the Social Welfare Act stipulates social support for people leaving prison that have difficulty adapting, as well as for children leaving care institutions. This includes support in obtaining adequate accommodation, including accommodation in sheltered housing.

In Spain, there are no specific interventions to avert homelessness upon release from institutions. Similarly, Greece has very few provisions in this area. There is a legal provision that prisoners who are homeless on release should be able to access dedicated hostel provision. The hostel



81 Irish Penal Trust Reform (2010) "*It's like stepping on a landmine….*" *- Reintegration of Prisoners in Ireland*, available at *http://www.iprt.ie/contents/1685*

82 *Mental Health Commission* (2009) Code of Practice on Admission, Transfer and Discharge to and from an Approved Centre, available at http://www.mhcirl.ie/Mental_Health_Act_2001/Mental_Health_Commission_Codes_of_Practice/Admission,Transfer_Discharge/

infrastructure, however, has not been developed, and some ex-prisoners are housed temporarily in hotels upon release.

FEANTSA recommends that all homelessness policies integrate targeted prevention as part of a comprehensive policy to address homelessness. Guidelines, protocols and legal frameworks to support institutional release should be backed up by adequate resources for implementation. The coordination of relevant organisations in the targeted prevention of evictions must be backed up by adequate information systems to be successful.

### *2.2.4 Quality in Homeless Services*

All EU Member States regulate in some way the provision of services to homeless people, although the degree of detail and prescription of those regulations vary. There is no single and precise definition of quality with regard to the services working with homeless people. In 2011, FEANTSA completed a detailed study of the different systems in place to promote quality service delivery in the homeless sector. The research found a wide variety of quality systems including legal regulation, promotion of quality through integrated homeless strategies, "soft" law mechanisms, self-regulation by the sector, quality assurance or control systems, and tools for quality management and outcome assessment. This research is not repeated here. Instead, an attempt is made to give an insight into the quality of homeless services across Europe on the basis of two indicators: levels of staffing in residential homeless services and the number of service users per room in different types of residential homeless service.

It should be noted that many respondents found these questions difficult to answer fully. In countries where there is not a detailed regulatory framework for homeless services, it is difficult to generalise. Also, as the homeless sector has become highly diversified and increasingly specialised in much of Europe, it was difficult for experts to account for the broad scope of provision within the framework of the questionnaire. The question asked national experts to report on "different types of residential homeless service" in their national context, and this posed considerable difficulty. This methodological consideration will be taken into account in future editions of this report which may focus on a limited number of specific service types. It should also be emphasised that staff levels and levels of occupancy in residential services offer a very limited view of the quality of homeless services. The objective here is not to go into detail on all aspects of the quality of homeless services in different countries, but to use these two indicators to provide a snapshot of the kind of experience that a homeless person using residential homeless services might have in different parts of the European Union. It should be borne in mind that this is a very incomplete picture and that supplementary information such as how long people spend in the services and where they move onto would give a more complete understanding of quality.

The number of people per room in homeless accommodation gives some insight into the extent that homeless people can enjoy privacy, dignity and personal safety. In some countries, hostels and night shelters with shared rooms and dormitories are common. People in shared accommodation face a lack of privacy. Furthermore, the concentration of homeless people with very diverse problems, some of whom have complex support needs, can mean that homeless accommodation is unsafe and that issues such as problematic drug and alcohol use are very difficult to tackle.

Overview of countries reporting shared rooms in shelter and hostel accommodation:

- In Lithuania, at the low-threshold municipal shelter in Vilnius there are 65 places. During the winter, 110 people regularly spend the night there. The accommodation consists of one large hall where people sleep on beds or on the floor. In a second municipal shelter, there are four floors where people sleep in rooms of 3-4 people. Homeless people with disabilities are assigned to the first floor, those with addictions or exhibiting "risky behaviour" on the 2nd floor, single mothers with children on the 3rd floor and families on the 4th floor. The city's third shelter which is run by an NGO is smaller and people stay in rooms of 3-4.

- In Portugal, the national expert reported that shelters in Lisbon could have between 2 and 25 beds per room. Poor overall quality, low quality food, a lack of privacy and

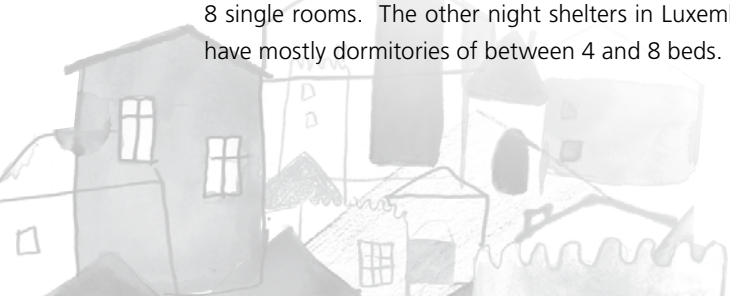
problems relating to safety and security which can have a negative impact on physical and mental well being were cited as common problems. Emergency and temporary accommodation services in Portugal have experienced an upsurge in demand since the crisis, which they are ill equipped to cope with.

- In the Czech Republic, overnight shelters generally accommodate between 4 and 20 people in a room. Most beds are bunk beds. In homeless hostels, the number of people per room is normally between 2 and 4. In "training flats" people either get their own room within a hostel or move into an apartment which is shared.
- 
- In Slovenia, most residential homeless facilities sleep 6–8 people in one room. Only the small-scale resettlement programme run by Kings of the Street in Ljubljana provides people with their own rooms.

- In Poland, the Regulation on funding for overnight shelters and homeless hostels contains a standard for new services and services that are being refurbished within the funding period. The minimum requirements are that rooms in overnight shelters should have at least 5 square metres per person, up to 15 people per room, and 50 people per institution. Hostels should have a maximum of 5 people per room and up to 50 per institution. A more general standard has been prepared under the project "Municipal Standard of Leaving Homelessness" (described below) which is more realistic for older institutions and states that overnight shelters should allow 3 square metres per person, up to 15 people per room and up to 80 people per institution. Hostels should allow at least 4 square metres per person, up to 5 persons per room, and 50 per institution.

- In Hungary, the legal framework regulating quality in homeless services stipulates that no more than 15 people should share a room and there must be at least 4 square metres per person in a room.

- In Luxembourg, the national expert described the example of the Ulysse Centre run by Caritas, which provides a day centre and overnight shelter. The service has two dormitories of 6 beds, two of 4 beds, 18 double rooms and 8 single rooms. The other night shelters in Luxembourg have mostly dormitories of between 4 and 8 beds.



In a number of countries, single rooms are dominant in most hostels and other forms of longer stay accommodation, whilst some overnight shelters still offer shared rooms. This is the case, for example, in the Netherlands.

In Sweden, the UK, Denmark and Finland, the use of shared rooms in hostels and night shelters is being eliminated. In Sweden, the national expert reported that as a general rule, accommodation for homeless people, including night shelters, offered single rooms and that no one would have to share a room if they chose not to. The basic aim of the Finnish homeless strategy over the past five years has been to arrange housing with a normal lease either in scattered housing or in communal housing units. The minimum standard used by the city of Helsinki for housing in supported and service accommodation is a room with a shower, toilet and a kitchen. Most of the new housing stock consists of fully equipped normal dwellings. In "communal housing first" provision, the accommodation consists of small studios with a room for services and group work somewhere on the premises. In Denmark, the standard is that all residential homeless services offer single rooms. The situation regarding toilets and bathrooms varies depending on the age of shelter and hostel accommodation. Some buildings date from a time when between ten and twenty residents had to share a toilet and bath. In the majority of homeless accommodation, three to four residents share these facilities. In the newest services, single rooms are en suite. In Germany, the national expert reported that most accommodation is single-room. In Scotland, the national expert mentioned that whilst most residential homeless services offer single rooms, there is a lack of services for couples who wish to share accommodation. "Traditional' dormitory-style hostels have been largely eliminated. In England, the 'places of change' programme which involved £90 million of funding for the improvement of hostels only funded single-room accommodation.

National experts also reported on the level of staffing in different types of residential homeless service. Many found it difficult to generalise on this point. As with the number of service users per room, there was considerable diversity across Europe:

- In Portugal, the national expert reported that whilst social workers are generally well-qualified, the ratio of staff to service users is too high for them to provide adequate

support. The national strategy set a target of 15–20 service users per social worker. Currently, the reality is more like 30–40, and more in some cases.

- In the Czech Republic, the legal framework governing quality of social services stipulates that every facility providing social services must have at least one qualified worker. As an example of staffing levels, The Salvation Army has a guideline of 20 to 25 users per a social worker.

- In Slovenia, the regulations regarding funding for homeless services set some guidelines regarding staffing levels. Funding can be provided for one professional worker per 30 users in drop-in and day centers. The regulation also stipulates that there cannot be more than one professional social worker for this type of service. At night shelters, one professional social worker per ten users can be funded. There should not be more than six employees and additional staff should not be professional social workers.

- In Hungary, there is a specific legal framework regulating the number of professionals in institutions providing long term residential care for homeless people. This includes four social workers and mental health co-workers per 50 beds in a homeless shelter and three social care providers. For nursing and rehabilitation centers there are also guidelines concerning medical staff.

- In Poland there are no countrywide standards adopted for the number of staff for residential homeless services. The proposed standard under the project "Municipal Standard of Leaving Homelessness" (described below) is for one staff member per 25 service users.

- In Lithuania, statistics from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour show that for 2010 there were 2,142 users of the 24 funded night shelters. There were 343 people working in these services, of which 223 were social workers or assistant social workers. This suggests that the overall ratio of qualified staff to users was approximately 1:10.

- In Ireland, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive has developed a voluntary quality framework in the context of the national strategy. Whilst there is no guidance on staffing levels, the framework does highlight the importance of induction and training of staff (paid and unpaid).

- In Luxembourg, the national expert took the example of the Ulysse Centre run by Caritas, which provides a day centre and overnight shelter. There are 13 full time education posts for 64 beds and 45 places in the day centre. In addition there are 2.5 full time social workers and 1.5 full time psychologists.

- In Denmark, information was provided on the level of training of staff but not on the ratio of staff to service users. Generally, the social education workers and social welfare officers working in the sector have a high level of professional training. There is some variation as quality standards are set at local level.

- In Sweden, the national expert reported that the city of Gothenburg employs approximately 450 social workers and provides accommodation for around 1,100 homeless persons per year. This provides an approximate ration of 2.4 clients to each social worker.

- In the Netherlands an average shelter has 200 workers and the majority are social workers.

- In Finland, the ratio of staff to clients is generally much lower than average and staff are well qualified. In Helsinki, the municipal quality criteria for commissioning of services for homeless people set the following standards:

Staff-to-client ratios:
- The minimum ratio in supported housing is 0.12 workers per tenant
- The minimum ratio in intensively supported housing is 0.3 workers per tenant
- The minimum ratio in "serviced-accommodation" is 0.4 per tenant

Staff qualifications:
- The manager of the service must have a university degree in social welfare or health
- There must be one qualified nurse per team
- Other staff members must have vocational qualifications in social and health care.

The diversity shown in the level of staffing and occupancy in homeless accommodation suggests that quality frameworks in Europe serve very different purposes in terms of defining the nature of services. Quality in terms of homeless

services can be approached in various ways. Donabedian distinguishes three aspects of quality of services: the structure of the service, the processes of care, and the outcomes of interventions.[83] Those Member States that change the central objective of their homeless policies from managing to ending homelessness need to increasingly take account of outcomes and care processes in terms of moving people on from homelessness, rather than solely focusing on structures (financial, infrastructural and human resources) to respond to basic needs.

An example of a quality framework focusing on structural concerns is the Hungarian legal framework which defines standards in homeless accommodation in a highly technical fashion, focusing on structural elements. A maximum of 15 people can be accommodated in one room, there must be at least four square metres of space per service user in a room, the opening hours of a temporary hostel cannot be fewer than 16 hours a day, there must be at least one shower and a toilet by gender per 15 service users, and a certain number of hours of social work that must be provided. These standards reflect the current context in Hungary where homeless policy is largely geared towards managing homelessness and providing structures to respond to service users' most basic needs. This type of quality framework is less useful for facilitating progress towards ending situations of homelessness. The development of tools to measure outcomes in terms of progress towards ending homeless is an important challenge for policy makers and service providers.

One example of the type of tool that can be useful in this respect are the "Outcomes Star for Homelessness", which is quite widely used in the UK. It is a tool that provides evidence of progress towards independent living. It focuses on 10 areas of progress: motivation and taking responsibility; self-care and living skills; managing money and personal administration; social networks and relationships; drug and alcohol misuse; physical health; emotional and mental health; meaningful use of time; managing tenancy and accommodation and offending. The information is recorded on a star which tracks progress. Another example is the self-sufficiency Matrix, developed by the Amsterdam Public Health Service. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix (SSM-D) tool measures the self-sufficiency of vulnerable people, including homeless people at intake and over time. Eleven areas of daily life (income, day-time activity, housing, mental health, physical health, family relationships, addiction, general daily skills, social network, social participation, judiciary) are given a self-sufficiency rating. A third example is the Polish voluntary quality framework "Municipal Standard of Leaving the Homelessness", which is an unprecedented step towards combating homelessness in Poland. Developed by a broad coalition of NGOs, public authorities and experts, it aims to improve the overall system in terms of its capacity to end and prevent homelessness by developing standards for services which can be applied in the framework of statutory "Municipal Strategies for Solving Social Problems". What is interesting about the model is that it goes far beyond structural elements of services to meet basic needs and tries to capture how services can successfully assist people in exiting homelessness. These are just three examples of approaches that use quality frameworks to capture progress towards ending homelessness. This type of tool is able to measure outcomes rather than being limited to structural elements of provision, and is therefore important in generating evidence about the success of policies in terms of making meaningful progress towards ending homelessness.

### *2.2.5 Coercive Homeless Policies*

Across the EU in recent years, at either national or city level, attempts have been made to regulate behaviour in public space, particularly begging, sleeping rough and the consumption of alcohol.[84] In many countries, legislation does not specifically punish homelessness but laws regulating the use of public space have a disproportionate effect on homeless people because of their enforced presence in public space.

A process of criminalisation of homelessness has taken place in Hungary over recent years. This started with the Building Act, which was modified in November 2010 to regulate the use of public space. On the 18th May 2011, Budapest City Council issued a decree that made sleeping on the street an offence and subjected people sleeping rough to fines of €200 and detention. Most recently, on the 10th November 2011, the Hungarian Parliament voted a law which allows for the imprisonment or 600 Euro fine of those found "guilty" of rough sleeping twice in a six month period. The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, which is a non-profit human rights watchdog has collected data on the examples of concrete cases of fines. Their figures to not cover all districts

83 FEANTSA (2011), *European Report in Quality on Social Services from the Perspective of Services working with Homeless People*
84 Busch-Geertsema, William Edgar, Eoin O'Sullivan and Nicholas Pleace (2010) *Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe: Lessons from Research*

but they recorded 838 procedures launched, 84 people found guilty, 31 people issued with a caution and 37 people fined over 2011. This type of coercive anti-homelessness strategy exacerbates the exclusion of homeless people and offers no real alternatives to homelessness whilst consuming considerable resources to implement. Making genuine progress on homelessness requires offering routes out of homelessness rather than pushing people into less visible forms of homelessness and further social exclusion.

In the Czech Republic, the national expert reported on a range of measures regulating behavior in public space with the imposition of fines at local level. The regulations concern "undesirable behavior" such as begging, alcohol consumption, and damage to property or equipment. These measures are generally enforced by city police or in some cases by private security companies regulating semi-public spaces such as shopping malls.

In Lithuania, Vilnius City Council has prohibited begging and giving money to beggars in the street under the City Management and Cleanliness Regulation. A fine of €290–580 has been introduced. The prohibition on begging or giving money to beggars is not imposed near places of worship, monasteries and convents or during religious services and events that have official permits from the city government. The Mayor of Vilnius defends the view that NGO service providers have sufficient capacity to help those people who require assistance and that begging is therefore a choice. The City Management and Cleanliness Regulations also forbid the establishment of temporary shelters under balconies of tenement buildings. This targets a common place for rough sleepers to take shelter, particularly during the summer. Vilnius Council has also tried to push homeless service provision out of the city to rid public space of homeless people.

In Slovenia, the 'law on protection of public peace and order' defines begging and sleeping in public space as offences. In 2009, the police recorded 399 begging offences and 337 sleeping in public space offences. Fines are imposed for these offences and people who do not pay the fine can be imprisoned or obliged to do community service.

On the 11th January 2011, Ireland adopted a new Criminal Justice Public Order law with new provisions on begging. The law concerns begging in front of automatic cash machines, night safes, vending machines, shop fronts or outside businesses. Non-compliance may lead to a fine of up to €500. Between the introduction of the new legislation in February 2011 and October 2011, more than 500 people were arrested in Dublin city centre. Anyone found running an orchestrated begging ring, forcing others to beg or living off the proceeds can face up to five years in jail and, or, a €200,000 fine.[85]

In Austria, a number of different *Länder* have adopted anti-begging legislation. Vienna, for example, prohibits "commercial begging''. The reinforcement of begging legislation has created widespread debate. Several cases from five different *Länder* are currently before the Constitutional Court. It is likely that general prohibitions of begging will be declared unconstitutional.[86]

In France, the national expert reported an increase in some types of repressive approaches to homelessness in recent years. The Homeland Security Act 2003 made spontaneous encampment a criminal offence. The expulsion of Roma living in camps has provoked particular debate. In addition, several local councils have passed bylaws prohibiting activities such as drinking, begging and going through dustbins. In Paris, several decrees had banned begging in certain tourist and shopping areas of the city in early 2012. However, in June, the new police prefect stopped the measures on the grounds that they were ineffective.

The Greek national expert reported that enforcement of various measures regulating public space in a way that targets certain groups of homeless people had been strengthened. This concerns anti-begging legislation, public health legislation and legislation concerning the occupation of public space. In particular, police organise increasingly frequent "sweeping operations" when they target "undesirable" elements in the city centre, particularly targeting Roma and homeless migrants.

In Spain, some local authorities have modified relevant bylaws to penalise homeless people. The city of Valladolid has modified the bylaw on "protection of co-existence and against antisocial actions" in order to forbid spitting or urinating in public, parking caravans or similar vehicles permanently, begging and offering objects or services to people



85 Paasche, Silke (2012) 'Is Anti-Begging Legislation 'Good Practice' in Tackling Homelessness?' in *The Geographies of Homelessness: Homeless Experiences and Homeless Policy in Different Spaces* Homeless in Europe, Summer, 2012, pp7-11 .

86 Ibid.

in cars. This is described by the national expert as a general trend. In Barcelona, an article on aggressive begging was introduced to the Bylaw to Promote and Guarantee Measures for Coexistence in 2005. In January 2012, the ombudsperson reported that one homeless person had been fined 100 times by the local police for begging.

Many Dutch local authorities have introduced regulations to control activities such as drinking and begging in public space. There is a general emphasis on getting people inside and off the streets, for example by making receipt of benefits conditional on accepting accommodation. Police regulations in the City of Rotterdam prohibit begging as well as loitering in public spaces in a way that could be a nuisance to others. Fines of up to €2,500 or three months' imprisonment apply.

In Poland, there are a variety of laws controlling homeless people's access to public space. These include limitations on public alcohol consumption, and a range of offences including disturbing the peace, swearing, vandalism and damage to plants in public spaces, begging under certain conditions, and littering or fouling public space. Regulations issued on the basis of the Civil Code by public and private institutions managing certain public spaces such as supermarkets, railway stations, parks and gardens allow these authorities to remove people for a variety of actions including sleeping and disturbing others with one's appearance or smell.

In Finland, no specific coercive measures have been introduced. There have been debates around anti-begging and legislative proposals on encampments, targeting Roma. In 2011, a parliamentary committee put forward plans to restrict begging and camping in urban areas. The proposal was eventually dropped but the issue remains on the agenda.

In Denmark, whilst there is no criminalisation of homelessness, the national expert reported a general increase in the regulation of public space through subtle means such as "designing out" homeless people by replacing comfortable benches in busy locations with less comfortable ones so as to discourage homeless people from staying there. In Luxembourg, the removal of public benches during the 2011 election period was also an issue. In Germany, the national expert highlighted a general increase in the regulation of public space and the fact that some local authorities implemented coercive measures.

An analysis of enforcement approaches to tackling "anti-social behaviour" in England has shown that whilst coercive measures tend to stigmatise homeless people, in situations where there is an extensive and highly professional service offer to help people move on from homelessness, they can engender some positive outcomes for homeless people.[87] They are nonetheless "high risk strategies" which can have negative outcomes for homeless people. FEANTSA members particularly deplore the use of coercive measures in contexts where there is no comprehensive policy framework for preventing and tackling homelessness. Even in those situations where effective services and choices are in place, the "high risk" nature of coercive policy approaches makes them questionable as effective policy instruments and they raise serious questions about respect for human rights and dignity. FEANTSA calls on policy makers to adopt integrated strategies to progressively reduce and end homelessness rather than criminalising homeless people and exacerbating their exclusion.

87 Johnsen, Sarah; Fitzpatrick, Suzanne: *Revanchist Sanitisation or Coercive Care? The Use of Enforcement to Combat Begging, Street Drinking and Rough Sleeping in England*, in Urban Studies, 2010, 47(8) 1703–1723, July 2010, p.1708.

# 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

## 3.1 The Extent of Homelessness

***Conclusions:***

Homelessness is a persistent reality in all Member States. Although the data in many contexts is inadequate to provide a detailed picture, it seems that homelessness has increased in the past 1-5 years in 15 Member States. In some instances, this increase is closely linked to the financial and economic crisis. In other cases, there is not a clear link to the crisis and rising homelessness reflects longer-standing structural problems, as well as a lack of effective policy for tackling homelessness in a number of contexts. Homelessness has decreased in the Netherlands, Finland and Scotland as a result of integrated homelessness strategies. In some countries, such as Ireland, the impact of the crisis on levels of homelessness has been limited by such integrated strategies. National and regional authorities should develop integrated homelessness strategies in order to gradually reduce homelessness. The European Commission should enhance mechanisms for structured transnational learning and support to develop such strategies. Countries where homelessness is rising rapidly as a result of the crisis require specific support. Public authorities should apply a social investment paradigm in relation to homelessness and take account of the long term savings that reducing homelessness/averting increases will incur.

***Calls for Specific Action:***

- The newly-proposed 'Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived' (FEAD)'[88] should be used to make progress towards reducing homelessness in Europe. Member States should use the programme for concrete actions to support integrated strategies to gradually reduce homelessness. For example, FEAD could be used to help homeless people move from shelters into independent or supported housing by providing "starter packs" containing basic household items. In order to maximise the impact of this instrument, the proposed "EU policy guidance" should support Member States to develop integrated strategies that seek to reduce homelessness over time, rather than simply manage it through short-term responses to basic needs.
- The rapid increase in homelessness in some Member States as a result of the crisis represents a major human and social emergency. The Community Mechanism for Civil Protection facilitates co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies. Member States and the European Commission should consider using the EU's civil protection mechanism and associated funding instruments in order to prevent and minimise the negative impact of dramatic increases in homelessness in the context of the crisis.
- Homelessness emerged as a clear priority within the Member States' 2012 National Reform Programmes (NRPs). More than half of the national governments of the EU have included targeted measures on homelessness within their NRP. Given this context, the European Commission and the Council could make recommendations to Member States on homelessness in the framework of the Country Specific Recommendations that are issued annually in the framework of the European Semester. This could support Member States that do not currently have an integrated homelessness strategy to develop one, in particular in those contexts where homelessness is increasing.
- In line with the horizontal social clause of the revised Lisbon Treaty (article 9 TFEU), Social Impact Assessments should be carried out on austerity measures imposed in the context of EU/international assistance programmes to Member States. These should take specific account of groups facing extreme poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness. Such action could help avert large increases in homelessness such as that currently taking place in Greece.

## 3.2 The Changing Profile of Homelessness

***Conclusions:***

The majority of homeless people in Europe are white, middle aged and male. Nonetheless, the profile of homelessness is changing in many Member States. This includes an increasing proportion of homeless women, families, migrants and young people. In some countries, the socioeconomic profile of homeless people has expanded as a result of the crisis



88 COM(2012) 617 final

and the new vulnerabilities caused by unemployment, cuts in welfare and exposure to the collapse of housing bubbles. Policymakers at national, regional and local level need to measure and respond to such changes. In order to do so, they must develop adequate data collection and information strategies. EU and national policy in relevant areas such as migration and free movement should also take full account of homelessness issues. Given the rise in youth homelessness in various Member States, policy initiatives in the area of youth should support measures to tackle youth homelessness. Policy makers should consider the impact of austerity measures in terms of increasing the vulnerability of specific groups to homelessness.

### *Calls for Specific Action:*

- Reduction and prevention of homelessness should be mainstreamed across all relevant policy areas (youth, family, welfare, migration, integration etc) at EU- and Member-State level.
- The European Commission should develop proposals for an integrated EU homelessness strategy in line with the outcomes of the European Consensus Conference and the Resolution of the European Parliament. This strategy should support Member States to respond to the changing profile of homeless people. Key issues in this framework include youth homelessness, family homelessness, homelessness amongst migrants and women's homelessness.
- In a number of Member States, homelessness amongst EU citizens exercising their right to free movement has increased significantly in recent years. FEANTSA therefore calls for Member States' integration policies to take into account EU citizens as well as third country nationals. EU legislation on free movement does not yet foresee enough guarantees for EU citizens who become destitute in another EU Member State and are economically inactive.
- In a number of countries, access to publicly funded shelters is denied to undocumented migrants (both from EU countries and third countries). This is a denial of fundamental rights. Indeed, emergency accommodation can save lives exactly as emergency healthcare does. FEANTSA therefore calls on the EU to guarantee access to basic services and facilities. These basic services should include food, healthcare, accommodation and other homeless services, such as bathing facilities, laundry and storage.
- Member States must not make improper demands on homeless services to compensate for the failure of migration policies. For instance, shelters in various Member States provide accommodation to asylum seekers when national authorities fail to do so. This is in breach of the EU directive on reception conditions of asylum seekers and can jeopardise integration and recovery from trauma. Homeless service providers do not necessarily have the capacity to respond to the needs of immigrants, and this can engender social exclusion.
- The EU and Member States should help homeless service providers to develop capacity to respond to the needs of homeless migrants. Since migrants make up an increasingly singificant part of the homeless population in some Member States, it is paramount for homeless service providers to develop the necessary skills in order to deal with the new challenges this situation brings. The EU and Member States should help homeless service providers financially in order to strengthen capacity.
- The Youth Opportunities Initiative, launched on 20th December 2011, is aimed at tackling youth unemployment in the European Union.[89] It supports unemployed young people into stable work or training. The European Commission has committed €4 million to help Member States set up Youth Guarantee schemes to ensure that young people are in a job, education or (re)training within four months of leaving school. In this context, FEANTSA calls on Member States to adopt an integrated approach to youth inclusion and to develop measures that ensure that young people can access adequate, affordable housing as well as employment and training.

## 3.3 Integrated Homelessness Strategies

### *Conclusions:*

Integrated homelessness strategies at national or regional level have been developed in 10 European countries. Key elements for successful integrated homelessness strategies include medium to long term strategic objectives and operational targets; a multi-dimensional approach including inter-ministerial and cross-sector working; a sustainable approach with regular review of policy in terms of progress and evolutions in homelessness; political commitment; and adequate funding. Integrated homeless strategies must aim to gradually reduce and ultimately end homelessness.

89 COM(2011) 933 final

Those countries that do not have integrated homelessness strategies can be divided into two groups: those where there is a well-established homeless service system but a lack of longer term strategic planning for the gradual reduction of homelessness; and those where the homeless service system is in a phase of development. Encouragingly, many countries that do not have a strategy in place are making progress towards implementing one. National and regional authorities should develop and maintain integrated strategies to gradually reduce – and ultimately end – homelessness. At EU level, work should continue to support Member States in this respect.

### *Calls for Specific Action:*

- In line with the outcomes of the European Consensus Conference and the European Parliament Resolution calling for an EU Homelessness Strategy, the European Commission should develop an integrated EU homelessness strategy. This should involve a multiannual work programme on homelessness involving all relevant stakeholders. Such a work programme should include mutual learning and transnational exchange, research and evaluation and mobilisation of relevant funding sources. It should align relevant policy instruments such as the Social OMC, the European Platform against Poverty, the structural funds, the Programme for Social Change and Innovation, and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. As a part of this programme, the European Commission should facilitate a regular meeting of European ministers responsible for homelessness in the Member States.
- In the new funding period (2014-2020) Member States should make optimal use of the EU Structural Funds to support the delivery of integrated homelessness strategies. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can be used to provide social and health infrastructure including housing, and the European Social Fund (ESF) to promote the social inclusion of homeless people.
- Public authorities must act to address implementation gaps where national/regional integrated homelessness strategies have been developed. This implies the investment of adequate resources and development of realistic timeframes for implementation with monitoring of progress in order to make a real impact of the lives of homeless people.

## 3.4 Evidence-Base for Homeless Policies:

### *Conclusions:*

There is considerable variation in the extent to which homeless policies are evidence-based in the EU. Some countries have strong data-collection systems that play a clear role in strategic planning and monitoring. Many countries have some data but it is insufficient for the purposes of strategic planning to end homelessness. Most countries have made progress on homeless data collection in recent years. There is also a well-developed body of knowledge at EU level about the type of data required and how this can be collected. Member States' homeless policies should be informed by evidence. This includes developing links between research and policy to enhance knowledge and understanding; having a clear definition of data management responsibility; having a clear definition of homelessness for the purpose of collecting data; developing a clear link between the strategic goals and the data-collection strategy; and having adequate data-collection tools in operation. Efforts must continue at EU- and Member-State level to improve data collection on homelessness in order to monitor policy progress.



### *Calls for Specific Action:*

- ETHOS should continue to be used as a European definition of homelessness.
- Eurostat should develop a retrospective question on experience of ETHOS categories to be included in the EU SILC questionnaire.
- At national and regional level, efforts to improve data collection should integrate the MPHASIS recommendations including the core variables. The European Commission should facilitate follow up of the MPHASIS project. For example, it would be useful to organise a stock-taking initiative with partners in order to analyse the progress made and where complementary support can be developed.
- An EU-level evaluation of efforts to include homeless people in the 2011 census should be conducted and policy recommendations issued about future guidelines.
- In the framework of an EU homelessness strategy, a multi-annual research agenda on homelessness should be developed to generate and share evidence on key issues to support policy-making.

- A European study should be carried out to provide evidence about the costs of homelessness and savings and/or offsets that can be engendered by effective policy intervention. This could be based on similar studies that have been carried out in the US and Australia.



## 3.5 Housing-Led Approaches and Prevention of Homelessness

***Conclusions:***

Homeless policies in much of the EU have become more comprehensive. They increasingly go beyond meeting the most basic needs of homeless people and involve provision for preventing homelessness and mechanisms to re-house homeless people quickly with appropriate support. The extent to which these two approaches have been adopted is diverse and in many contexts they require further development. Policymakers should consolidate prevention and housing-led approaches in their homelessness policies and move towards integrated strategies to deliver this. Homeless strategies should aim to prevent homelessness as far as possible and to re-house homeless people as quickly as possible.

***Calls for Specific Action:***

- EU funding tools such as the structural funds, the European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation (EUPSCI), and the Life Long Learning Programme should be mobilised to help deliver housing-led approaches to homelessness and targeted prevention.

- Structured transnational exchange and mutual learning on preventing homelessness and implementing housing-led approaches should continue and be enhanced in the framework of an EU homelessness strategy. There is a clear demand for this from service providers and policy makers.

- In the framework of an EU homelessness strategy, the EC should develop tools to support the analysis and scaling-up of the Housing First model. The social experimentation project Housing First Europe has been an important first step in this direction. Further activities should focus on developing the evidence base about the model's effectiveness and transferability as well as supporting scale-up through the EUPSCI and the structural funds.

- The European Commission and the Member States should evaluate the feasibility of using innovative funding mechanisms such as Social Investment Bonds to support the implementation of housing-led approaches in the Member States, and particularly the role that the EIB could play in this respect.

## 3.6 Quality in Homeless Services

***Conclusions:***

Analysis of two very limited indicators (staffing levels and room occupancy in residential homeless services) show that there is great diversity in the quality of homeless services in Europe. Conditions range from overcrowded dormitories to single rooms in shelter and hostel accommodation. The extent to which homeless people receive individual care from qualified social workers also varies considerably. Policies orientated towards ending homelessness need to develop quality frameworks which support ending situations of homelessness rather than managing homelessness. There are several examples of useful quality measurement tools of this type. Policymakers and service providers should ensure that homeless services respect the human rights and dignity of homeless people.

***Calls for Specific Actions:***

- Further to its commitment in the framework of the European Platform against Poverty, the European Commission should develop the Voluntary European Quality Framework on social services at sector level, including in the field of long-term care and homelessness.

- In the framework of an EU homelessness strategy, the European Union should support transnational training and skills development for people working in services for homeless people. CEDEFOP has already identified skills gaps in the social care area and could develop further work on homelessness. The EU's Life Long Learning programme should also be mobilised in this respect.

- At European, national, regional and local level homeless service providers should be actively involved in the development of innovative tools to measure outcomes in the homeless sector.



## 3.7 Coercive Policy Measures

***Conclusions:***

In a number of contexts, measures have been introduced to criminalise homeless people or to use enforcement measures to control their use of public space. This often reflects a failure of homeless policy to offer decent alternatives to homelessness. Even when there are well developed homeless services that can facilitate genuine exits from homelessness, coercive approaches represent a high risk strategy and can have negative outcomes for homeless people.

***Calls for Specific Action:***

- Policymakers should abandon coercive measures to tackling homelessness and develop integrated strategies instead. These are more effective in the long run.

- EU policy support and coordination in the framework of a future EU homelessness strategy should actively support Member States to develop alternatives to criminalisation.

# Annex 1: Toolkit for developing an integrated strategy to tackle homelessness



FEANTSA, the European Federation of organisations working with people who are homeless, has promoted and facilitated transnational exchanges between homeless services across Europe for the past 20 years. Analysis and reviews of homeless policies in this framework have revealed that a variety of approaches exist to combating homelessness. Most countries have integrated several of the 10 approaches listed below. FEANTSA believes that the most effective homelessness policies should include all these 10 approaches, but a balance should be found in accordance with the political context in which the authority developing and implementing the policy operates. There is still much scope for improvement of homelessness policies, and FEANTSA believes that the following 10 approaches could be an interesting guide for policy makers, NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in the fight against homelessness.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1 Evidence-based approach** | A good understanding of the problem of homelessness is key to developing effective policies. This can be done through:<br>Monitoring and documentation of trends in homelessness and numbers of homeless people, and development of appropriate indicators<br>Research and analysis on the causes of and solutions to homelessness should complement monitoring and documentation<br>Regular revision of policies is necessary and most effective with a sound understanding of homelessness |
| **2 Comprehensive approach** | A comprehensive approach to combating homelessness includes policies on emergency services and resettlement of people who are homeless, and on the prevention of homelessness:<br>Emergency services are a crucial first step to prevent people from living on the street for long periods<br>Integration should be the objective for all people who are homeless and should be adapted to the needs and potential or the individual person who is homeless<br>Prevention - both targeted prevention (evictions, discharges from institutions) and systemic prevention (through general housing, education, employment policies) are necessary |
| **3 Multi-dimensional approach** | Homelessness is acknowledged to be a phenomenon requiring solutions based on multi-dimensional approaches including:<br>Integrating housing, health, employment, education and training and other perspectives in a homeless strategy, since the routes in and out of homelessness can be very diverse<br>Interagency working and general cooperation with other sectors as a vital component of every effective homeless strategy since homelessness cannot be tackled in a sustainable way by the homeless sector only<br>Interdepartmental working between relevant housing, employment, health and other ministries is crucial for developing effective strategies to tackle homelessness, and to avoid negative repercussions of policies developed in different fields |
| **4 Rights-based approach** | A rights-based approach to tackling homelessness promotes access to decent, stable housing as the indispensable precondition for the exercise of most of the other fundamental rights through:<br>Use of international treaties on housing rights as a basis for developing a homeless strategy<br>Focus on enforceable right to housing to ensure the effective exercise of the right to housing<br>Acknowledgement of the interdependence of housing and other rights such as the right to live in dignity, the right to health |
| **5 Participatory approach** | Homelessness is a field where cooperation with service providers is crucial given their expertise on how to tackle the problem, and entails participation in the following ways:<br>Involvement of all stakeholders (namely service providers, service users and public authorities) in policy development and evaluation is important for pooling all expertise and capacity available aiming to tackling homelessness<br>Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing policy through a coordinated effort is the best way to achieve the objectives of any homeless strategy<br>Participation of people experiencing homelessness should be used for the improvement of service quality and policy-making.<br>Appropriate consultation structures should be created to take real account of the experience of people who are homeless |

| | |
|---|---|
| **6 Statutory approach** | A statutory approach aims to underpin homeless strategies with legislation through:<br>A legal framework at national level/regional level, which allows for consistency and accountability in implementation of homeless policies<br>Statutory aims and objectives serve to effectively monitor and evaluate policy progress |
| **7 Sustainable approach** | Three elements create a genuinely sustainable approach to tackling homelessness leading to sustainable solutions:<br>Adequate funding is crucial for any long-term strategy to tackle and end homelessness<br>Political commitment at all levels (national, regional and local)<br>Public support generated through information and awareness campaigns |
| **8 Needs-based approach** | This approach is based on the principle that policies should be<br>Developed according to existing needs of the individual rather than structural needs of organisations:<br>Needs of individual are the starting point for policy development on the basis of regular needs surveys and by means of individualised integration plans<br>Appropriate revision of homeless policies and structures is necessary on a regular basis |
| **9 Pragmatic approach** | A pragmatic approach consists of the two following elements:<br>Realistic and achievable objectives are necessary and possible when adequate research is carried out to fully understand the nature and scope of homelessness, the needs of the people who are homeless, the evolution of the housing and labour market and all other related areas<br>A clear and realistic time schedule with long-term targets as well as intermediate targets |
| **10 Bottom-up approach** | A bottom-up approach is about developing policy responses to homelessness at local level (within a clear national or regional framework) based on two elements:<br>Importance of local authorities for the implementation of homeless strategies through a shift towards greater involvement, more responsibility and more binding duties at local level<br>Bringing service delivery closer to people who are homeless with local authorities in a strong position to coordinate partnerships between all relevant actors in the fight to end homelessness |

# Annex 2: Core Variables for Homeless Information Systems

| Variable | CORE |
|---|---|
| **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS: AGE AND GENDER** | |
| Age | Date of birth |
| Sex | Male/Female |
| **NATIONALITY/MIGRATION BACKGROUND** | |
| Nationality (Country of citizenship) | National; non-national (national of other EU Member State; born in non EU country) |
| **HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS** | |
| Household structure/living situation | • One person households<br>• Multi-person households:<br>◗ Lone parent living with child(ren) aged less than 25<br>◗ Couple living without children aged less than 25<br>◗ Couple living with child(ren) aged less than 25<br>◗ Other type of household |
| **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS** | |
| Previous accommodation, night before entering service and current accommodation situation (at date of counting) | Living Rough (public space / external space)<br>In emergency accommodation (overnight shelters)<br>In accommodation for the homeless (homeless hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional supported accommodation)<br>Living in crisis shelter for domestic violence<br>Living in institutions (health care, prison, child care)<br>Living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (mobile homes, non-standard building, temporary structure)<br>Sharing with friends or relatives (due to homelessness)<br>Homeless and living in other types of accommodation<br>Not homeless |
| Duration of (current) homelessness | Less than 2 months; 2 to under 6 months; 6 months to under 1 year ; 1 to under 3 years; 3 to under 5 years; 5 years and longer |
| **REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS** | |
| Reason(s) for last period of homelessness as defined by the homeless person (several answers possible) | Landlord Action (eviction) /Mortgage repossession<br>End of contract / unfit housing / lack of housing<br>Relationship breakdown / family conflict / death<br>Loss of job / unemployment<br>Violence<br>Personal (support needs / addiction / health) Financial (debt)<br>Discharge from institution / armed forces<br>Immigration<br>Force majeur (fire, flood etc).<br>Other reasons |

Source: Busch-Geertsema and Edgar, 2009



# Annex 3: Questionnaire

## 1. National Strategies



OBJECTIVE:
To gather information about the number and nature of national/regional homelessness strategies in Europe and to be able to report on how homelessness policies are organised in Member States.

**1.1** Is there a specific integrated strategy[90] for tackling homelessness in your national/regional context? If yes, please explain briefly how this strategy is organised (legislative/statutory basis, governance responsible bodies, time frame, budget, aims, evidence base, etc)

**1.2** If there is not yet such a strategy, has there been progress towards one over the past year/five years? Please give full details (e.g. establishment of high-level steering group; high-level events and discussions; government commitments).

**1.3** If there is not a specific integrated strategy for tackling homelessness in your national/regional context, please describe the current homeless policy framework (Which bodies are responsible for homelessness policy? How is responsibility divided between national/regional/local levels? What are the relevant rights, duties and responsibilities etc?)

**1.4** How has funding available for the fight against homelessness evolved over the past year/five years? Please give details of increases or decreases. If there is not a specific homelessness budget, please try to give an indication of the evolution of relevant budgets (e.g those available for temporary accommodation, social support etc).

**1.5** Homelessness as a political priority:
a) Has there been a clear government commitment to tackling homelessness (e.g. speech of the Head of State, key government decision, setting up of an inter-ministerial working group, key event)? Please give details.
b) Has there been any public demonstration of interest in the issue? Please give details.
c) In your opinion, has there been any evolution in the extent to which homelessness is a visible political priority in your national/regional context? Please justify.

**1.6** Does your national/regional strategy/policy context include:
a) A ministry/specific entity with lead responsibility for homelessness? Please give details.
b) A multi-stakeholder steering group? Please give details.
c) Regular consultation with stakeholders? Please give details.
d) Legal basis for governance? Please give details.
e) Governance structure to facilitate coordination between different ministries? Please give details.
f) Governance structure to facilitate coordination between different levels of government? Please give details.
g) Other governance elements you feel are conducive/counter to an integrated strategic approach? Please give details.

90 An integrated strategic approach to homelessness policies, brought together in a specific document/legislation.

## 2. Targets, monitoring and homelessness data collection[91]

OBJECTIVE:
To gather information about the extent to which homelessness policies in Member States are underpinned by clear targets and proper data collection, and to gain understanding about trends in homelessness.



**2.1** Targets/monitoring of progress in framework of strategic approach:

a) Does the national/regional strategy/policy framework contain measurable targets/goals? Please give details.

b) If the national/regional strategy/policy framework does contain measurable targets/goals, is there a monitoring framework for measuring progress towards these targets? Please give details.

c) What progress towards the targets mentioned above has been achieved?

**2.2** Data collection on homelessness:

2.2.1 Is there a national/regional data collection strategy to measure homelessness in your national/regional context? If yes please give details. If not, what measuring does take place on the extent of homelessness?

2.2.2 If possible, please provide the latest figures for the number of people in the following living situations on a **given night** (point-in-time survey) in your national/regional context. If national/regional data is not available, you may wish to refer to a local situation e.g. the capital city:

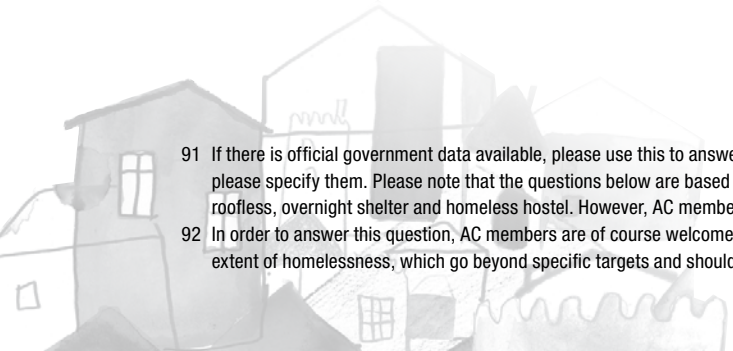
a) roofless
b) in overnight shelter
c) in homeless hostels
d) If data is available for other ETHOS categories, please also give details.

2.2.3 If possible, please provide the latest figures for the number of people in the following living situations over the **last year/a given year in the past five years** (annual prevalence count) in your national/regional context:

a) roofless
b) in overnight shelter
c) in homeless hostels
d) If data is available for other ETHOS categories, please also give details.

2.2.4 Overall, is there evidence that homelessness has reduced or increased in your national/regional context over the past year/five years? Please explain the evidence available and possible reasons for the increase/decrease [92]

2.2.5 Is there evidence that the profiles of homeless people (particularly gender, age and nationality) have changed in your national context? Please explain the evidence available and try to explain reasons for the increase/decrease.



91 If there is official government data available, please use this to answer the following questions. If this is not the case, you are invited to use other data sources but please specify them. Please note that the questions below are based on ETHOS categories. In the first instance the question is limited to three living situations: roofless, overnight shelter and homeless hostel. However, AC members are encouraged to refer to other ETHOS categories if possible.

92 In order to answer this question, AC members are of course welcome to cite their answer to 2.1c. However, there may also be additional indicators of changes to the extent of homelessness, which go beyond specific targets and should be mentioned here.

## 3. Key areas in the fight against homelessness

OBJECTIVE:
To gather information on the way that key areas in the fight against homelessness are addressed by Member States' homelessness policies. Specifically, to explore how the following areas identified in the 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion are addressed:

- Targeted prevention of homelessness
- Strong housing dimension
- Quality of homeless services



**3.1** Prevention:

3.1.1 Evictions:

a) Are there specific interventions to combat evictions in the framework of the national/regional strategy/policy framework? Please give details
b) Overall, is there evidence that evictions have reduced or increased in your national/regional context over the past year/five years? Please explain the evidence available and possible reasons for the increase/decrease
c) If there is no data available, are there any plans for introducing data collections on eviction?

3.1.2 People leaving institutions:

a) Is there a specific focus on people leaving institutions in the framework of your national/regional strategy/policy framework? Please give details.
b) Is there evidence available about the number of prisoners discharged without a housing solution in your national/regional context? If so, please give details
c) Is there evidence available about the number of people discharged from hospital/treatment without a housing solution in your national/regional context? If so, please give details.
d) Is there evidence available about the latest figures for the number of people leaving state care without a housing solution in your national/regional context?

**3.2** Housing-led approaches:

a) Is there a specific focus on housing solutions for homeless people within the national/regional strategy/policy framework? Please give details.
b) If possible, please provide evidence on the number of social housing allocations to homeless people (ETHOS categories 1 and 2) per year in your national/regional context?
c) If possible, please provide evidence on the number of homeless people (ETHOS categories 1 and 2) who are housed in the private rental sector per year in your national/regional context?
d) Has there been an evolution in the number of hostel beds in your national/regional context?
e) If so, does this reflect a shift from using hostels as the predominant solution to homelessness towards 'housing led' approaches? Please give details.

**3.3** Quality of homeless services:

a) Please describe the levels of staffing in different types of residential homeless service in your national/regional context.
b) Please describe the number of homeless people per room in different types of residential homeless service in your national/regional context.

## 4. Research

OBJECTIVE:
To gain insight into the extent to which Member States' homelessness policies are evidence-based



**4.1** Is there a specific budget reserved for research in the framework on your national/regional strategy? Please give details.

**4.2** Please describe any significant research on homelessness that has been commissioned in the framework of your national/regional strategy over the past year/five years? Please explain what the research was and why it is important.

**4.3** Has research on homelessness been carried out in your national/regional context that has contributed to increased understanding and awareness or furthered policy development in the past year/five years? Please give details

## 5. Changes to services and entitlements

OBJECTIVE:
To gather information on evolutions in service provision and entitlements of homeless people in Member States

**5.1** Have there been any changes in the entitlements of homeless people to benefits and social services? Specifically in relation to:

a) subsistence benefit
b) housing benefit
c) emergency healthcare
d) mental healthcare

**5.2** Please outline any changes over the past year/five years in the level and type of homeless service provision.

## 6. Coercive policy approaches

OBJECTIVE:
To identify any trends in the use of coercive approaches in Member States' responses to homelessness

**6.1** Have there been any initiatives to restrict the use of public space by homeless people in recent years? Please give details, including local examples.

**6.2** Has there been any evolution in the use of coercive strategies in your national/regional context over the past year/five years. Please explain.

**FEANTSA is supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).**

This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.
The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.
To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

DESIGN: WWW.BEELZEPUB.COM

**European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, AISBL**

*Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri, AISBL*

194, Chaussée de Louvain
1210 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 538 66 69
Fax: +32 (0)2 539 41 74
Email: information@feantsa.org

Printed on 100% recycled paper stock