Homelessness Strategies in European Union Member States – The State of Play in 2024

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Member States [are called] to tackle the issue of homelessness urgently by adopting long-term, community-based, housing-led, integrated national homelessness strategies, as encouraged by the EU's social investment package (European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU (2020/2802(RSP)), Item 20).

It is possible to progressively reduce homelessness in order to end it – a growing number of Member States have demonstrated a move away from reactive management towards progressive reduction through co-ordinated and comprehensive approaches within national/regional homelessness strategies (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010: 12).

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FEANTSA Forward

Homelessness is a growing problem in Europe. There are record numbers of homeless people currently in many Member States. However, a handful of European countries have developed successful strategies to reduce homelessness. In the context of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, all EU Member States have committed to work together to end homelessness, and to make significant progress by 2030. How can they best do this? This report attempts to shed light on that by examining the current state of play of homelessness strategies in Europe.

At FEANTSA, we use the term homelessness strategy to refer to a coherent plan of action to tackle homelessness. More than 30 years of experience in European cooperation on homelessness has taught us that such a plan is necessary and can be transformative. Without such a plan, it is difficult to see how progress can materialise. There is no agreed European definition of what a homelessness strategy is. Homelessness strategies may take different forms. FEANTSA does not advocate for a one size fits all approach. We acknowledge that countries are at different stages in developing strategies and that public policy planning looks different in different contexts. Furthermore, having a strategy is not in itself a guarantee of progress. The quality of a strategy matters at least as much as its existence.

How many countries have a homelessness strategy? What do they contain? FEANTSA is proud to have supported Shmulik Szeintuch in attempting to answer these important questions. The resulting paper seeks to contribute to strengthening public policies to address homelessness in Europe. We hope it is a step forward, and certainly not the end point, in an open European conversation about what each Member State needs to do to end homelessness. This research

shows that half the EU Member States lack a homelessness strategy. Furthermore, the report draws out key elements for effective homelessness strategies.

Whilst this kind of stock-taking is essential, we warn that EPOCH must not become a bureaucratic exercise in ticking off documents. FEANTSA is not interested in the production of paper strategies, and even less in reports about them. Rather, we want EPOCH to become a forum for debate, exchange, inspiration and even peer pressure that helps Member States do better in the fight against homelessness. We sincerely hope that this paper will contribute to that.

Ruth Owen, Deputy Director of FEANTSA

Executive summary

The aim of this overview is to analyse existing data on European Union national and regional homelessness strategies in order to enable policy makers, researchers, service providers and people with experience of homelessness to develop their own national, regional, and municipal strategies in a way that is best tailored to their own country or locality, as well as to improve existing strategies in their next updated version.

This research paper is written in the context of the **European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH)**, against the backdrop of the global housing crisis. Moreover, in the past two decades homelessness strategies were developed around the world, including in European Union Member States.

The paper has four main chapters:

1. A literature review that analyses some existing research and practical tools relating to homelessness strategies, and lays the ground for the analysis of existing strategies.
2. The 2024 state of play of homelessness strategies in the EU.
3. The presentation of questionnaire results regarding EU homelessness strategies.
4. A proposal for a good homelessness strategy.

Methodology

This research paper draws on four main sources to present national and regional homelessness strategies in the EU in 2024:

1. This research's survey, which targeted a selection of national policy makers, researchers, and representatives of the homelessness sector from European Union Member States.

2. An unpublished earlier research endeavour regarding homelessness strategies developed by the European Commission.

3. The website of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.

4. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Country Notes.

2024 State of Play of European Union Member States Homelessness Strategies

Member States were found to have homelessness strategies with different forms – either a specific homelessness strategy, or as part of a housing, or anti-poverty strategy, etc. Some strategies include all people experiencing homelessness, while others deal only with rough sleeping - unsheltered homelessness. Some of the strategies deal mainly with support, while others mention both support and housing.

There are 14 up-to-date national homelessness strategies and extensive relevant policy documents in European Union Member States. However, one should examine these 14 documents to clearly understand the EU state of play, as they strongly differ from each other. Their existence does not guarantee good policy. A discussion of this examination takes place in the research paper you are reading now.

The quality of these 14 documents, as well as their implementation, illustrates clear variations between Member States' homelessness policies. However, the in-depth examination of the documents' quality and implementation, lies outside the remit of this research.

14 EU Member States were found to have active up-to-date national homelessness strategies or other extensive policies:

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, **Ireland, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain** and **Sweden.**

Italy was found to have an outdated strategy and to be working on its update.

Further, 10 regions in EU Member States were found to have active up-to-date homelessness strategies. Once again, there are different orientations, target populations, and services. These strategies consist of one page or longer. Although we asked respondents to detail information about regional strategies, we presume that the results did not capture the actual number of such strategies. The regional strategies captured through the research are from: **Flanders** (BE); **Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland** and **Saxony** (DE); **Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Catalonia**, **Andalusia** and **Basque Country** (ES).

Finally, we learned the following:

One Member State is currently developing a homelessness strategy: **Slovenia**.

One region is currently developing a homelessness strategy: **Thuringia** (DE).

Forty-three regions in **The Netherlands** (NL) are working on bringing their regional plans in line with the national strategy.

At least five municipalities have a homelessness strategy: **Berlin** (DE), **Brussels** (BE), **Budapest** (HU), **Lisbon** (PT) and **Vienna** (AT).

Two municipalities are developing a homelessness strategy: **Salzburg** and **Graz** (AT).

It should be noted that the information regarding municipalities is probably not conclusive. We did not search for municipal homelessness strategies and present here only information that was given to us despite this.

As already mentioned, the presentation of Member States' national and regional homelessness strategies in this research paper includes different sorts of policy documents. We cannot guarantee the presented strategies' effectiveness nor quality, on which we do not comment in this research.

This analysis allowed us to present where in the EU homelessness strategies exist and what they contain. Much more work needs to be done to evaluate these strategies.

Questionnaire results

We recorded 46 valid responses to our questionnaire.

Below you may find some information collected from the questionnaire.

According to respondents their homelessness strategies include the following :

Category	Percentage
Goals	97%
Housing First	87%
Data collection	81%
Prevention	77%
Sheltered people	74%
Governance structure	74%
Monitoring	74%
Housing-led	68%
A legal framework	68%
Funding	68%
Un-sheltered people	55%
Emergency accommodation	55%
A lead agency	48%
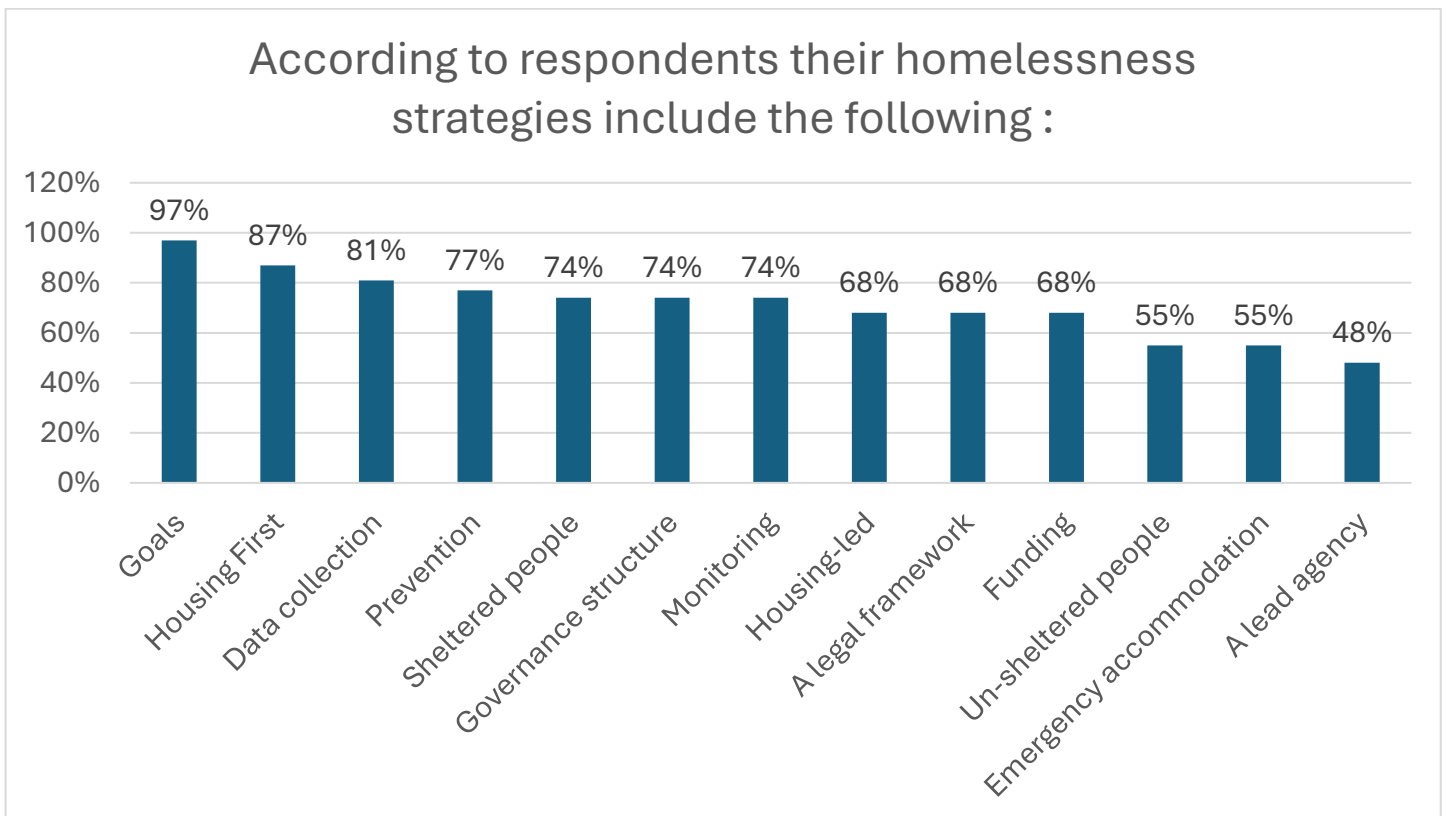
Most respondents answered the following question:

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion, does the implementation of a homelessness strategy contribute to resolving the issue of homelessness?

Don't know
7%

No
7%

Yes
86%

■ Yes　■ No　■ Don't know
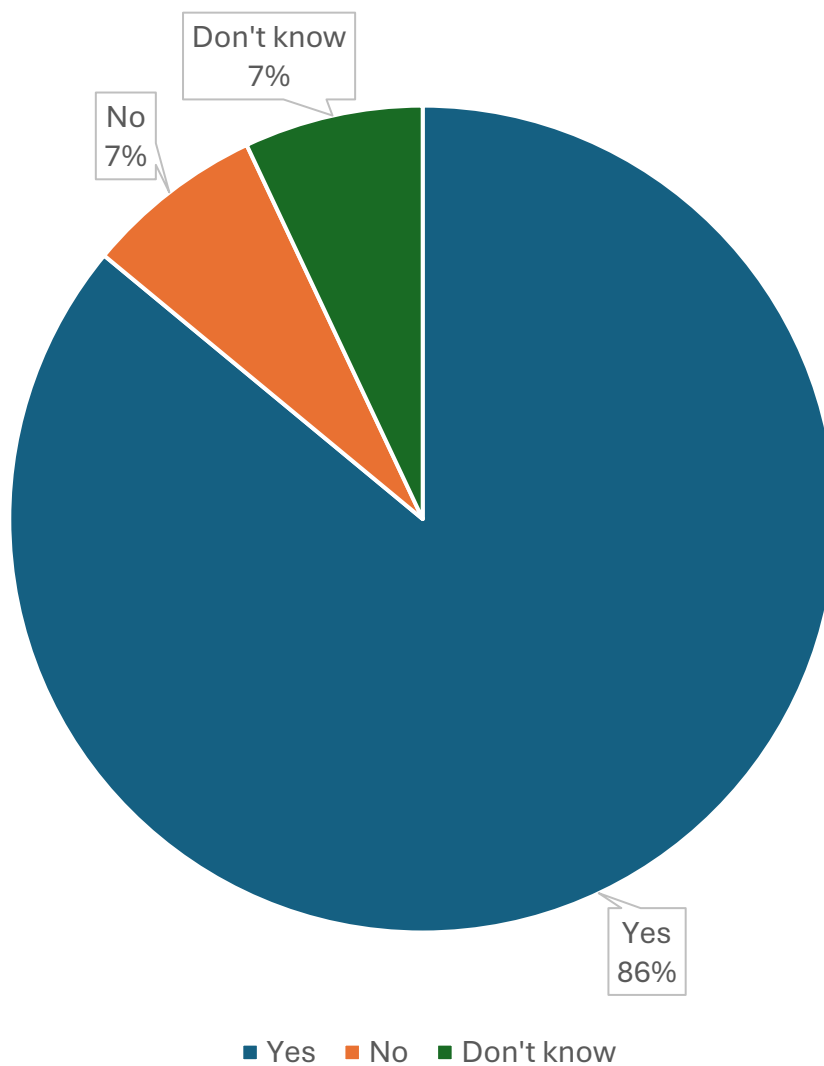
A proposal for a good homelessness strategy

Key issues and points that should be part of a good and effective homelessness strategy

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3. Mission, objectives, targets and goals

4. Collaboration

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8. Data collection

9. Prevention

10. Temporary accommodation

11. Permanent long-term housing solutions

12. An integrated approach

13. Time frame

14. Monitoring and evaluation

Introduction

Rapid population growth combined with growing urbanisation outpace adequate and affordable housing worldwide (United Nations Statistics Division, 2019). A growing number of European countries report overrepresentation of some ethnic minority populations in their homeless population (Baptista and Marlier, 2019). Meanwhile, according to research, there is growing awareness that migration may have become a structural factor of homelessness (Hermans et al., 2020).

In her political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (2024), expressed the urgent need to "address the housing crisis facing millions of families and young people" (18). This housing crisis is the context in which homelessness strategies were developed during the past two decades: mainly in northern and western European countries, while the eastern countries seem to have lagged behind (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010; Baptista and Marlier. 2019). In the Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness of 2021 all signatories, including all European Union (EU) Member States (MSs) agreed "to launch this platform and to work towards the ending of homelessness by 2030" (for more information about the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH) see also Leterme and Develtere, 2023).

This declaration was developed on the basis of some prior decisions and tools, including the European Pillar on Social Rights, the European Parliament Resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the European Union, and the European Parliament Resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all.

The European Commission Work Programme of EPOCH for 2022-2024 states that national, regional and local authorities will:

- promote the **prevention of homelessness, access to permanent housing and the provision of enabling support services to the homeless**, which could, amongst others, be done by:
   - **developing and adopting strategies** for the eradication of homelessness, according to the principles enshrined in the Declaration (European Commission, 2022: 6).

European Commissioner for Employment and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit and then French Minister for Housing Emmanuelle Wargon met on 28 February 2022 in Issy-les-Moulinaux, France, with ministers responsible for combating homelessness, as well as representatives of the European institutions, local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society, to validate this programme.

The aim of this overview is to analyse existing data on EU national and regional homelessness strategies in order to enable policy makers, researchers, service providers and people with experience of homelessness, to develop their own national, regional and local strategies, in a way that is best tailored to their own country or locality, as well as to improve existing strategies in their next updated version.

As strategies keep on being developed as well as updated, we do not aim to give a full exhaustive picture of the current situation for two main reasons: 1. As we finish writing this overview the full picture will already be a bit different as things change all the time; and 2. It is an almost impossible task to do this, and we want to be able to supply the reader with a practical tool, rather than a perfect one.

This overview is composed of four main chapters:

1. A literature review that analyses some existing research and practical tools relating to homelessness strategies, and sets the ground for the analysis of existing strategies.

2. The 2024 state of play of homelessness strategies in the EU.

3. The presentation of questionnaire results regarding EU homelessness strategies.

4. A proposal for a good homelessness strategy.

This document avoids dealing with what often serves as an introduction to the topic in written literature including issues such as definitions and drivers of homelessness, as well as profiles and numbers of people experiencing homelessness. You can find these in the existing literature (see for example: Baptista and Marlier, 2019; FEANTSA and Abbé Pierre Foundation, 2024; Johnson, Culhane, Fitzpatrick, Metraux and O'Sullivan, 2024; Martin, Lawson, Milligan, Hartley, Pawson and Dodson, 2023; O'Sullivan, Benjaminsen, Busch-Geertsema, Filipovic Hrast, Pleace, and Teller, 2023; Parsell, 2023).

Finally, we assume that we did not capture all the existing EU MSs' national and regional homelessness strategies. In this context this is a work in progress. If you know of a national or regional homelessness strategy that we did not write about, we would love to hear from you. Please write to: epoch.practice@feantsa.org

We will now turn to a review of the existing literature on homelessness strategies. This will serve as infrastructure on which we will develop the rest of this document, including the strategy development guidelines below.

Review of the literature

Strategic planning to address the problem of homelessness internationally has become more common as the service sector has grown more sophisticated, and as social policies in the area have become more expansive and detailed (Pleace, Culhane, Granfelt and Knutagård, 2015: 23).

Homelessness strategies

After United States (US) local governments failed to address homelessness properly, a 1996 paper spoke about planning a homelessness strategy as an innovation providing a continuum of homelessness care for prevention, emergency relief and long-term care (Berman, 1996).

Recently, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024) defined homelessness strategies "as policy documents setting out targets and actions to tackle homelessness, requiring links across policy sectors" (p.1). Strategic planning may also be defined as "a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why." (Bryson, 2011: 7-8). A definition of strategic frameworks describes "agreed goals and long-term plans that focus efforts of stakeholders towards desired outcomes" (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2021: 6, Table 1).

Planning is not enough. For its success, a plan should be implemented, so it does not end up simply on someone's office shelf. If it does not stay on the shelf, a strategic plan which is designed by and with multiple stakeholders may help to alleviate homelessness (Lee, Shinn and Culhane, 2021).

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2021) policies for affordable housing should address four topics, for planning and implementation to be effective:

(1) housing governance and regulation;

(2) access to finance and funding;

(3) access and availability of land for housing construction; and

(4) climate-neutral housing construction and renovation.

As housing systems are dynamic and change over time, governments need not only plan and implement strategies effectively, but also evaluate them whilst adapting them to conditions that change over time.

Note that policies for affordable housing should not be dealt with as interchangeable but rather possibly including homelessness policies.

Homelessness strategies in Europe

There have been at least two decades of discussions regarding homelessness strategic planning in Europe. The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) (2010) published a handbook for policy makers, which includes its policy toolkit, that tried to give some guidance for developing a homelessness strategy. Further, FEANTSA's magazine summer issue of 2015 dealt with different aspects of homelessness strategies. Benjaminsen and Dyb, (2010), as well as Pleace, Culhane, Granfelt and Knutagård (2015), offer reviews of homelessness strategies as were relevant at the time, while O'Sullivan (2022a; 2022b) and O'Sullivan, Benjaminsen, Busch-Geertsema, Filipovic Hrast, Pleace and Teller (2023), provide some up-to-date information about some of these strategies.

Further, there are some documents dealing with homelessness strategies in specific states and regions. Most of these examine existing strategies, whilst some others deal with their absence.

Some examples include papers about **Portugal** (Baptista, 2009; 2013; 2018, Ferreira Martins and Ferreira, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2010), **Portugal and Ireland** (Baptista and O'Sullivan, 2008), **Ireland, (**Baptista, Culhane, Pleace, and O'Sullivan, 2022; Gavin, 2010), **Finland** (Kaakinen, 2015; Pleace, 2017; Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009), **Spain** (Baptista, 2016; Bezunartea, 2022; Rodilla and Lopez, 2023; Ruiz Bautista, 2010), **Poland** (Olech and Rogozińska, 2010; Wygnańska, 2009), **Norway** (Edgar, 2006; Halseth**,** Larsson and Urstad, 2022), **Denmark** (Benjaminsen and Kamstrup, 2010; Skovlund Asmussen and Maini-Thorsen, 2022), **Czechia (**Dutka, 2022), **France** (Uhry, 2015), **Germany (**Maretzki, 2022), **Greece** (Pertsinidou and Soulele, 2015), **Hungary** (Bakos and Ghyczy, 2010), **Netherlads** (Hermans, 2012), **Serbia** (Cirkovic and Terzic, 2010), **Sweden** (Sahlin, 2015), **Scandinavian Countries** (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2008), **Flanders** (Beyers, 2015; Hermans, 2017), **Wales** (Dalton, 2022) and **Scotland** (Anderson, 2007; 2019). Further, there are 35 national reports which are part of the 2019 study of national policies by the European Social Policy Network (ESPN).

Norway and Finland seem to offer very good examples – though not the only ones – of dealing with homelessness in Europe. In Norway, the State Housing Bank (Husbanken) has had a crucial coordinating responsibility for implementation of the national strategy (Edgar, 2006). A Husbanken analysis recently noted that "the reduction in the number of homeless people is a result of national cooperation and a long-term integrated strategy for housing and support services" (Halseth et al., 2022: 21; see also the whole FEANTSA Magazine spring issue that deals with national homelessness strategies).

Many strategies were drafted in the past two decades in the EU. However, this did not happen in all EU Member States, and not in all regions of the Union.

Key events and documents underpinning European Union homelessness strategies

Some important events and documents may be spotlighted in relation to EU homelessness strategies in the last two decades. These will be noted below and include 1) The Consensus Conference (2010); 2) A study of national policies by the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) (Baptista and Marlier, 2019); and 3) The Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (2021):

1. The Consensus Conference on Homelessness took place in Brussels in 2010. It was an event of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU and sought to establish an evidence-based consensus on how to advance in tackling homelessness in Europe. The outcomes of this Conference include very thick documents, of which we would like to present here only a pinch. Some European Journal of Homelessness papers also exist that delineate as well as examine and critique the Conference (see some contributions in the 2011 Special Section on the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness in Volume 5, Issue 2 of the Journal).

The Conference jury concluded that homelessness strategies can both prevent people from becoming homeless and ensure quick provision of long-term solutions for those who are experiencing homelessness. The Jury further expressed a need for an ambitious EU homelessness strategy that would frame the development of Member States' national and regional strategies and enhance progress in the fight against homelessness (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010).

Bearing in mind the question of whether there should exist an EU strategy on homelessness (see Fitzpatrick 2011), the Conference jury recommended some elements for an EU homelessness strategy. These EU level elements may also be relevant for the development of

national and regional strategies (see European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010: pp. 22-24).

2. The study of national policies by the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was published in 2019. Experts from the ESPN were asked by the European Commission to examine evidence, policy approaches and overall strategic frameworks addressing homelessness and housing exclusion and assess their effectiveness. The outcomes of this request include a synthesis report (Baptista and Marlier, 2019) and the 35 national experts reports mentioned above.

Like the Consensus Conference conclusion, ESPN experts also spoke of an EU homelessness strategy, mentioning the European Parliament's resolutions from 2011 and 2014 urging the European Commission to develop such an all-encompassing EU strategy, that could support Member States in their fights against homelessness. In 2013 the Commission called on Member States to develop national strategies, as part of the EU Social Investment Package (Baptista and Marlier, 2019).

Baptista and Marlier (2019) report that 16 Member States have national, regional or local homelessness strategies. Key elements include housing-led and/or Housing First services, prevention, monitoring, funding and multi-level and multi-sectoral governance structures which enhance cooperation in policy and delivery. Finally, they note some systemic causes which limit trajectories out of homelessness and housing exclusion. These include lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment, as well as insecure employment, and problematic social protection – including low levels of welfare benefits. When attempting to develop a homelessness strategy, it is worth consulting the synthesis report's recommendation to countries as well as EU level recommendations (pp. 18-22).

This is also the place to reiterate the European Pillar on Social Rights, the European Parliament Resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the European Union, and the European Parliament Resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all

3. The Lisbon declaration on combatting homelessness, signed on 21 June 2021 launched EPOCH – the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, in the context of which this paper is written.

Key issues and points of an effective homelessness strategy

Below we elaborate on various issues that are relevant for an effective homelessness strategy, as these arise from the literature.

Legal framework

> Ending homelessness is not possible without a sufficient legal framework to support the implementation of homelessness strategies. The European Social Charter already provides a strong foundation for national legislation (Kaakinen, 2010: 38).

The legal framework for action against homelessness is important for any related strategy. In Norway, for example, it was built based on the Social Services Act (1991) within the framework of a national housing policy, in which municipalities were encouraged to develop strategies for providing housing support (Edgar, 2006).

A human rights approach to homelessness

A legal framework with an effective and human-rights-based approach to realising the right to housing for people experiencing homelessness should be reflected in a strategy based on these principles. Finland's constitutionally enshrined programmatic right to housing together with its homelessness strategy offer a progressive realisation of the right to housing, even if this right may not be enforced through the courts. Another different example is Scotland's legal right to housing, which is enforceable through the courts (DesBaillets and Hamill, 2022).

The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights enshrines the right to housing. Article 11 (1) recognizes *"the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."* (United Nations, 1966). While abiding by a human rights approach to homelessness, the unequivocal mission is to end it - as housing is a human right. This should not remove the responsibility of managing homelessness and doing the best we can with anyone currently experiencing homelessness until we achieve our mission (For more information about a human rights approach to homelessness, and a wider range of international legal instruments to achieve the right to housing, see Housing Rights Watch).

Note that even though we specifically mention and elaborate here regarding the right to housing, human rights go beyond housing to include other rights like dignity, freedom from degrading treatment and others.

Mission, objectives, targets and goals

Strategies, as well as academic and other professional literature, are full of possible strategy objectives, targets and goals. Having examined many strategies and a great volume of the relevant professional literature, our evaluation is that the **mission** of any homelessness policy

is to **provide people experiencing homelessness with decent healthy lives and wellbeing.** We presume that different documents confuse these terms – mission, objectives, targets and goals, and allow for this confusion here. In order not to obscure anything with a possibly vague mission, and make proper government intervention possible (see Coyle, 2024), we propose below a detailed tier-based plan based on the literature where, for the sake of this paper, the mission is at the top, served by the primary and other objectives, as well as targets and goals. Based on this assessment we can conclude here that in 2024 it seems that an agreed **primary objective** of a homelessness strategy that would enable the mission mentioned above is to **end homelessness;** (the jury of the Consensus Conference called for ending homelessness to be the long-term goal underpinning an EU homelessness strategy – European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010). The **secondary objectives** to support ending homelessness should include the **delivery of long-term permanent housing,** and the **prevention** of homelessness (see the relevant sections below: especially *permanent long-term housing solutions* and *prevention*). Within this framework **one important target** of a strategy that may serve as an indicator to determine how successful we are in achieving the strategy's objectives should be to **reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness** (see for example Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010, regarding success measurement of strategies in pp. 133-134). **Another target** may be to **reduce the time that people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation before they go on to permanent accommodation** (see the relevant sections below: especially *permanent long-term housing solutions* and *ending homelessness*). **Two main goals** that may support the main objective are the **collection of data** – including homeless counts (regarding these issues see Develtere, 2022; Hermans, 2024), as well as to **shift from emergency shelter as the predominant response to homelessness towards the provision of adequate levels of long-term permanent housing-led, including Housing First, services,**

while building more such permanent housing opportunities (see for example Boone, Cournède and Plouin, 2021).

Collaboration is key – from development to implementation and beyond

> Homelessness will not disappear completely because of a collaborative strategic plan's design, but much headway can be made towards strategically and collaboratively alleviating this social ill (Lee, McGuire and Kim, 2018: 374).

As an 'intractable' (Eide 2022), 'wicked' (Brown, Keast, Waterhouse, Murphy and Mandell 2012) social problem, homelessness should be granted "an innovative, collaborative, government-led response" (Lucas and Boudreaux, 2024: 146). As no stakeholder can solve it on their own, a strategic plan designed by and with multiple stakeholders was noted as the factor that may help alleviate homelessness (Lee, McGuire and Kim, 2018). The collaboration between manifold stakeholders has been shown to be crucial for the success of a homelessness strategy. This is true for the different stages of the strategy – from the development stage, all the way through to implementation, as well as monitoring and possible adjustments to the strategy. Research regarding Finland and Norway shows that collaboration is the infrastructure upon which strategies are developed and implemented (Edgar, 2006; Halseth et al., 2022; Pleace, 2017).

Relevant stakeholders may include different tiers of government at central, regional and local levels, as well as quasi-governmental and non-governmental agencies, that undertake strategic planning that involves a multi-person effort supplying many different types and degrees of inputs (Edgar, 2006; Lee, McGuire and Kim, 2018; Pleace, 2017). One specific stakeholder group which has been shown to be crucial in this strategic process are experts by lived experience of homelessness (Dalton, 2022; Pleace, 2017).

Implementation

> Once plans are launched, communities can struggle to sustain the momentum needed to do the actual long-term work of implementation (Buchnea, Legate, Mckitterick and Morton, 2021).

Some plans simply stay on someone's office shelf, as not all plans are actionable (Lee, McGuire and Kim, 2018); they may end up as a mere 'paper strategy' (Owen, 2015). For the development stage to not end up as an end in itself, implementation should be at the heart of a homelessness strategy from the outset. Even when a homelessness strategy has already been developed, often there is little guidance about factors contributing to its being that strategy which constitutes lasting positive impact and change. This is sometimes due to lack of resources and knowledge that are needed for the implementation stage (Buchnea et al., 2021). Manifold stakeholders are also part of the implementation stage of any strategy, and there is growing awareness of the need to address complex problems arising at this stage (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010).

Although a strategy may be developed and lead at the national or regional level, implementation is mostly coordinated and enacted by lower levels of government, which themselves involve more new stakeholders for the implementation stage (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010; Buchnea et al., 2021; Edgar, 2006). Success and failure may be determined by a "complex interplay of responsibilities, resources, organisation and social practices at the local level, including the structural context of the availability of affordable housing" (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010: 136). Therefore, great attention needs to be given to implementation, so that all the resources that were put into the strategy are not lost. Obviously, adequate funding is a condition of successful implementation, as may be seen in the "funding" section below.

Governance

Effective implementation is based on improved governance. Most papers written about homelessness strategies include mention of the proper governance mechanisms needed in their implementation.

> Three elements prove to be particularly useful in improving governance in the area of homelessness and housing exclusion where responsibilities are shared between different levels of government and NGOs: *leadership* by the main public authority in charge of homelessness and housing exclusion policies; *participation* and consultation of relevant stakeholders in policy design and implementation; and *consensus* on the agreed strategy (Council of Ministers 2010: 83).

There is a strong voice that one single agency should take the lead on any homelessness strategy (Edgar, 2006; Martin et al., 2023), or agencies (Pleace, 2017).

These agency or agencies need to get involved and form agreements with a wide range of stakeholders inside and outside government (Edgar, 2006; Martin et al., 2023; Pleace, 2017).

This was found to be imperative in all nine homelessness strategies analysed in two different European welfare regimes (Benjaminsen, Dyb and O'Sullivan, 2009).

Robust political commitment is crucial to a successful strategy. The varied political and institutional stakeholders need to commit and take upon themselves shared responsibility for the development and implementation of the strategy (Baptista and Marlier, 2019; European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010) (For more information see also the 2009 issue of The European Journal of Homelessness dealing with governance). As ending homelessness is unlikely to be achieved in a single political term, political commitment needs to be able to withstand changes in government (see below the unique example of the Danish agreement regarding homelessness between political parties inside and outside of the government).

Funding

> Successful policy needs to be backed by sufficient financial resources and eradicating homelessness is no exemption (Ivanković Knežević, 2024).

"We have strong empirical evidence which shows that ending homelessness is possible, it is realistic, it is ethically justifiable, and it is also economically viable" (Kaakinen, 2010: 38). ESPN experts report some positive as well as problematic points related to the funding of homelessness strategies in 35 examined countries. Some of the positive points include significant investment in permanent housing, adequate financing mechanisms and increased budgets and funding. Some of the barriers to adequate funding were found to include reductions in funding of course, as well as absence of funding mechanisms within the strategy, short-term financing models, and threats to national-level funding due to the end of international financial support (Baptista and Marlier, 2019).

Policymakers have a responsibility to develop adequate strategies that include proper mechanisms enabling access to finance and funding (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2021). Claiming this responsibility, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) in the European Commission and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) are co-leading a dedicated working group on access to finance, set up in May 2023, in order to implement the *workstream on funding* as part of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness (Ivanković Knežević, 2024).

Data collection

> The planning and implementation of measures that aim to eliminate homelessness is not possible without reliable basic information based on research and an understanding of homelessness as a phenomenon. Regular revision of policies is

necessary and most effective with a sound understanding of homelessness (Kaakinen, 2010: 36).

Data collection is at the core of successful homelessness strategies as all the literature we examined shows. In addition to the Finnish example cited above (Kaakinen, 2010), which includes a firm commitment to collect measurable and reliable data about homelessness and available housing options, the Danish and Scottish strategies also share this commitment. In both cases governments adapted strategies to reflect research findings and data collection, thus making their strategies more successful (Jones and Archer, 2015). Further, in 2022, the German Federal government undertook their first enumeration of people experiencing homeless (see https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Wohnungslosigkeit/_inhalt.html; Regarding homelessness data collection at the EU-level see Hermans, 2024, as well as the full special edition of the European Journal of Homelessness regarding measuring homelessness in Europe, Volume 14, No. 3 from 2020).

Ending homelessness

As an unequivocal conclusion drawn from the Finnish experiences it can be stated that eliminating homelessness is an entirely feasible and realistic objective. It requires persistent, systematic work, which is not possible without an extensive political consensus ranging from the national to the local level. Building an extensive political consensus is not self-evident, it requires strategic initiatives where the active role of relevant state officials and NGOs is crucial. Political legitimacy also prepares the way for the acquisition of financial resources. Moreover, eliminating homelessness is not even a major economic cost if we

consider the financial savings that result from the elimination of homelessness (Kaakinen, 2010: 36).

Strategies should aim to eliminate, as far as possible, the bottlenecks between temporary and permanent accommodation, thus striving to solve the problem of homelessness rather than manage it (Edgar, 2006). 'Managing' homelessness includes reactive solutions, often targeted at the most extreme manifestations of homelessness and focused mainly on temporary accommodation and emergency interventions, keeping people experiencing homelessness within the 'homeless system'. Whereas ending homelessness is a realistic objective (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010).

There will always be people who become homeless – because of, for example, natural disasters, fire or flooding, arriving in a new area, or fleeing violence. Homelessness strategies should incorporate measures to prevent homelessness while ensuring solutions for those who end up experiencing homelessness. It is important to understand that in the foreseeable future there will always be a need for emergency services. However, these services should be the gateway to permanent accommodation within a reasonable time frame (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010). In the eradication of homelessness, a balance should be found between the prevention of homelessness and the excellent services provided to those experiencing homelessness, as long as it is impossible to stop the in-flow (Kaakinen, 2010). Finally, when aiming to practically end homelessness it is not enough to perfect our services, which may rectify other systems' failures while keeping people housed. Rather, we should ensure we end the conditions that allow the perpetuation of homelessness across multiple systems (Gaetz and Buchnea, 2023).

While striving to end homelessness it is important to note that the cycle has gone from managing, to solving, to managing and solving homelessness.

Prevention

To decrease the need for managing homelessness and to make a big step towards solving and ending homelessness, prevention emerges as a crucial element of 35 countries' homelessness strategies (Baptista and Marlier, 2019). Preventing homelessness includes the reduction of evictions (Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010; Council of Ministers, 2010; Kaakinen, 2010). A former Dutch strategy focused on evictions and people leaving institutions as main triggers of homelessness (Hermans, 2012). According to the evaluation of the Finnish strategy – which may be considered as an example of successfully tackling homelessness at the strategic level (Pleace, 2017) - prevention needs to identify people at risk of long-term and recurrent homelessness (Kaakinen, 2015). The provision of affordable housing and reducing poverty may be the most crucial interventions to prevent homelessness (O'Sullivan, 2022b). In this respect, mainstreaming homelessness by including housing issues within the strategies of other policy areas such as housing strategies and anti-poverty strategies may be useful (Edgar, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2022b). In any case, homelessness strategies must be prevention-oriented in order to enable proper trajectories towards ending homelessness (Mackie, 2023; see also Gaetz, 2020).

Permanent long-term housing solutions: Housing-led approaches including Housing First

Many OECD and EU countries promote Housing First and other housing-led approaches for people experiencing homelessness (OECD, 2024). A Norwegian strategy seminar document includes the agreement of all seminar participants that Housing First is a desirable approach, and that the length of time that people stay in temporary accommodation should be shortened, to eliminate bottlenecks between temporary and permanent accommodation (Edgar, 2006).

Almost two decades on, the Norwegian Husbanken analysis states that the long-term strategic work that took place during this period focused more and more on cooperation across welfare provision fields, as well as management levels between ministries and municipalities, and was always underpinned by the housing-led approach (Halseth et al., 2022).

In their 2010 literature review of homelessness strategies, Benjaminsen and Dyb found the Housing First paradigm in almost all countries and their strategies. Further, the successful Finnish strategy has been based on Housing First (Kaakinen, 2015), and ESPN experts reported in 2019 an increasing shift towards housing-led and Housing First services in integrated strategic frameworks, with a growing presence in Europe of housing-led services, including Housing First (Baptista and Marlier, 2019). Respondents to this research's questionnaire stated that 87% of strategies include Housing First.

"By letting evidence "guide" policy, proponents [of Housing First] argue, the only obstacle becomes something like "political will" needed to fund that policy to fruition" (Lucas and Boudreaux, 2024: 163). While this may be true to some extent, researchers argue that this is questionable. Maybe the failure to end homelessness is due to other factors, such as Housing First evidence not being as conclusive as it may seem, definitely not for all homelessness populations (Lucas and Boudreaux, 2024).

Further, others caution that while Housing First ethos and general principles are key and should inform all dimensions of an effective homelessness strategy, it may not be enough for a functional strategy. The challenges they note to its success include "lack of housing supply, inadequate access to mental health, health and social care systems, and a welfare system that cannot meet the costs of adequate housing and prevent after housing cost poverty" (O'Sullivan et al., 2023: 47).

Finally, it should be noted here that the

> Finnish applications of the Housing First model are not particularly faithful to the
> original American model. The most important issue in the Finnish homelessness
> policy has been loyalty to the most important principles of the Housing First
> philosophy, which are permanence of housing, the principle of harm reduction and
> the right of the customers to make choices with regard to support services (Pleace,
> et al., 2015: 13).

Time frame

In 2015, the UN's *Agenda for Sustainable Development* pledged to end poverty in all its forms
everywhere (Goal 1) by the year 2030. It also pledged to make cities and human settlements
inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11), while ensuring access for all to adequate,
safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrading slums (11.1). Having noted these
UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Lisbon declaration signatories agreed to work towards
the ending of homelessness by 2030. Since then, some European homelessness strategies have
adopted this time frame. Generally, it is a common practice to attach a time frame to a strategy.
However, a word of caution is in order here: time frames may be important and so is the
commitment to end homelessness in European Member States by 2030. However, as the
Finnish example shows us, even successful endeavours may take substantial time, including
potential failures of not reaching their set goals in the exact given time frame.

At one time, the Finnish government set the target of eliminating long-term homelessness in
Finland entirely by 2015 (Kaakinen, 2010: 35). As we know, although the numbers have
decreased, there are still people experiencing homelessness in Finland in 2024, and the current
end-date for eradicating homelessness in its strategy is 2027 (see Kaakinen, 2023).

This word of caution is against the frustration that we may encounter when nearing 2030 if the homeless population does not equate to zero in all Member States. As the Finnish exercise shows us, it is essential to maintain a long-term commitment and to adapt, even if specific goals are missed. Otherwise, there is a risk of generating frustration and losing political commitment. It is important to bear in mind that the objective of ending homelessness has been playing an important role in guiding thinking and action, and at the same time has become a widely accepted, socially important and worthy cause. Further, the international literature proves that striving towards ending homelessness is an economically sound investment (Kaakinen, 2023). One may encounter advice to "give the "ending homelessness" talk a rest" (Eide, 2022: 150). However, we believe that while maintaining a human rights approach to homelessness – as delineated above, we do not have the privilege to do this.

Monitoring and evaluation

The jury of the consensus conference called for annual or bi-annual reporting on progress (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010). The ESPN synthesis report called upon countries developing homelessness strategies to enact efficient monitoring and assessment tools and ensure regular reporting mechanisms (Baptista and Marlier, 2019).

An example of the need for monitoring was lately portrayed by an Auditor General's report on chronic homelessness in Canada, which found that the government agencies responsible for the homelessness strategy "did not know whether their efforts improved housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness or chronic homelessness" (Auditor General of Canada, 2022: 7, 5.22). Even though it spent about 1.36 billion Canadian dollars between 2019 and 2021 (40% of the total amount committed to the programme), the lead government agency "did not know whether chronic homelessness and homelessness had increased or decreased since

2019 as a result of this investment" (5.23). Further, the audit found that another lead agency could not account for the beneficiaries of the strategy's implementation, and finally it suggested there was minimal accountability for reaching the strategy's target. As a result, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (2023) of the House of Commons in the Canadian Parliament made recommendations to ensure that the Office of the Auditor General's recommendations are adequately followed, and that those organisations which were audited provide progress reports to the committee.

It seems there are no formally established and standardised impact evaluation methodologies for homelessness intervention programs, particularly in the European context. Further, it seems there is no consensus on the best outcome variables that would measure homelessness interventions (Rodilla, Puchol and Botija, 2023).

When monitoring and measuring results and the impact of a homelessness strategy, quite a few issues may be checked. Some examples of such indicators include the numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, households in hostels, evictions, repeat homelessness, people supported to independence, and people sustained in independence, as well as the number of people who were prevented from experiencing homelessness and the duration of homelessness (Munslow, 2010).

Clear and realistic objectives, targets and goals may serve as a useful monitoring tool. These may be adjusted as needed (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010; Edgar, 2006; Hermans, 2017). In any case, a robust theoretical framework is crucial for an effective evaluation (Rodilla, et al., 2023).

Mutual learning and transfer of policy between countries

Lisbon Declaration signatories acknowledge

> the need for European policy support and coordination to promote progress, notably through mutual learning and support to collaboration (p. 4).

"Municipalities, regional authorities and national governments routinely search for inspiration and solutions to their policy challenges abroad" (Blanc, Cotella and Dąbrowski, 2023: 749). On the one hand, policy transfer can be an excellent trigger for innovation and learning. However, on the other hand there are drawbacks to policy transfer, including governments trying to legitimise domestic decisions by considering the transfer a 'silver bullet' in addressing domestic policy failures.

EPOCH Practice is EPOCH's mutual learning axis and aims to enable mutual learning and policy transfer, including regarding homelessness strategies, between EU Member States.

The first and most important lesson we can learn in Europe and hopefully transfer from Finland as a member state, is that ending homelessness is a feasible task. Speaking of drawbacks, transfer of homelessness policy from Finland to other contexts is not necessarily straight forward due to factors such as Finland's size (with a population of less than 6 million people) and it being a rich country (Pleace, 2017).

Having highlighted the need for caution in the consideration of effective policy transfer from one country to another, the Norwegian seminar participants advocated homelessness policy transfer while noting the possible constraints of this endeavour, such as different forms of governance, structures of the housing market, profiles of homelessness, as well as resources that should underpin any homelessness strategy, that may influence the varying quality of such strategies in different countries (Edgar, 2006).

Finally, in the context of EPOCH, the European Commission invited the OECD to produce a policy toolkit that will help Member States to develop their own homelessness strategies (Leterme and Develtere, 2023). As the OECD includes member states of its own, the scope of which is wider than that of the EU, this toolkit's influence will transcend that of the EU.

Non-European examples of homelessness strategies

With over two decades of developing homelessness strategies, European countries have a lot to give through international mutual learning and policy transfer also outside of European borders. They may also benefit from non-European homelessness strategies and their development processes. Some examples are delineated below.

One such relevant country is **New Zealand**. A New Zealand parliamentary report advanced in 2016 the creation of a national strategy to end homelessness, stating "Many local government organisations already have these and they are effective at ensuring there is concerted action to reduce homelessness" (New Zealand Parliament, 2016: 13). The creation of this strategy was one of the recommendations of this document. The Aotearoa/New Zealand homelessness action plan was published in 2019. The first phase of the plan (2020-2023) aimed to prevent and reduce homelessness.

In neighbouring **Australia** there have been a couple of national strategies – in 1992 and 2008. In 2024 the Government is developing a 10-year national housing and homelessness plan with state and territory governments (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023a). At the end of 2023, the consultation stage was over and a summary report of the consultations was published, as a step on the way to publishing the plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023b).

The **Canadian** 10-year homelessness strategy Reaching Home, which was launched in 2019, was also developed through extensive community and expert consultations (see Gaetz and Redman, 2019). It aims to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50 percent by 2028. The program's directives detail the funding mechanism and eligible activities.

It seems that structural constraints pose barriers to developing and implementing homelessness strategies at the federal level in the federative constructs of Canada (DesBaillets and Hamill, 2022) and Australia (Martin et al., 2023). The **US** is another federal government that built a federal strategy. All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, which was published in 2022, aims to reduce homelessness by 25 percent by 2025.

The US federal government, through the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), has been acting in the twenty first century to prevent and eradicate homelessness. It has been doing this whilst initiating and leading what would become a global trend of moving from the linear model to Housing First, which lies at the forefront of the US government's mission to end homelessness. It may be argued that this mission was set due to a combination of the rise of Housing First and the onset of the 2009 global financial crisis, while historically, US federal homelessness strategies revolve around three main areas: funding increases, Housing First prioritisation, and strategic revisions (Lucas and Boudreaux, 2024). This is the case, while in the US the lack of affordable housing has been found to be the main driver of homelessness, whilst its supply was found to be a primary solution to it (Batko and Culhane, 2023). A paper dealing with the homelessness strategy of the US state of Utah may also be found (Svedin and Valero, 2020).

A European Union homelessness strategy

The Commission [is called] to propose an EU Framework for National Homelessness Strategies (European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU (2020/2802(RSP)), Item 8)

Over the years there have been quite a few calls for an EU homelessness strategy that would underpin Member States' national and regional strategies. The European Parliament called for it in 2008, while the network of independent experts on social inclusion of the European Commission asked for such a strategy in 2009. These calls propose that an EU strategy would focus on data collection, monitoring and mutual learning. A similar call came from the Committee of the Regions in 2010, emphasising the role of local and regional authorities (Spinnewijn, 2010).

According to the jury of the Consensus Conference,

> An EU strategy on homelessness should go beyond monitoring and reporting, and deliver a package of activities to support the development and sustaining of effective national/regional homelessness strategies. In accordance with the key elements of national/regional strategies set out by the 2010 Joint Report […], this means promoting integrated approaches and good governance; building capacity for data collection within Member States; developing and promoting knowledge and best practice in relation to housing-led approaches; promoting quality services; and developing EU level responses to the growing problem of homelessness amongst migrants (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010: 23).

The jury goes on to set out the mechanisms to achieve this.

The ESPN synthesis report also calls for the development of an EU approach

> to support Member States in ending homelessness, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, and informed by a set of key principles: knowledge sharing and transnational exchange, research and innovation, a common reference framework, and appropriate funding.

Following the Consensus Conference jury, ESPN experts also called upon the EU to develop a homelessness action plan that takes migrants into consideration.

Finally, on 13 December 2023 the European Economic and Social Committee called on the European Commission to

> draft a proposal for a new multiannual work programme as soon as possible and in close collaboration with all stakeholders, making use of the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund to fund housing solutions for homeless people.

An integrated approach

Ending homelessness is only possible in the context of an integrated approach encompassing all relevant policy areas such as social policy, housing, health, employment, education, training, and migration etc. This includes taking account of the gender dimension of homelessness in the context of gender mainstreaming (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010: 12).

Housing, which arises from this literature review as a crucial facet of any solution to homelessness, cannot and should not stand alone. This is especially true when, whilst striving to achieve an end to homelessness, it must still be managed as there are still people experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness strategies should incorporate an integrated approach, that brings together all relevant fields (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010). Such fields may include **health, mental health**, **social care and assistance**, **welfare, unemployment, education, skills, migration and criminal justice systems** – including **criminalisation** and **imprisonment** (e.g. Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010; Edgar, 2006; Hermans, 2012; Maretzki, 2022; O'Sullivan et al., 2023; Pleace, 2017; Skovlund Asmussen and Maini-Thorsen, 2022; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2021). These add onto the key issues discussed above including prevention, temporary accommodation and permanent long-term housing solutions.

We will end this literature review by posing some questions laid down by Benjaminsen and Dyb, 2010) regarding the organisation of complex interventions:

> How are problems of coordination among different service providers and institutional systems – social services, health services, criminal services, housing authorities, etc. – tackled locally? Do the national strategies provide new initiatives for handling such issues? Are new requirements set in the case of people leaving institutions such as hostels, hospitals or prisons? Are services for the homeless integrated into mainstream social services or are there parallel support systems? Does the extent of municipal responsibilities make a difference? How do the

national strategies deal with such issues – and what lessons can be learned from comparative research at the local level? (136-137).

After a short presentation of this research's methodology, we will turn to present the state of play of European Union Member States' homelessness strategies in 2024.

Methodology

The methodology underpinning this research includes the following:

1. An international review of the literature regarding homelessness strategies.

2. A Qualtrics questionnaire (see appendix A) sent by email link to 82 Member State delegates, homelessness professionals and researchers.

3. Official homelessness strategies and other policy documents were collected through four channels:

   a. The survey questionnaire, as well as personal communications.

   b. An unpublished previous research endeavour regarding homelessness strategies developed by the European Commission (2023).

   c. The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL) website. Some documents were extracted from this site on 19 April 2024.

   d. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Country Notes. A few additional documents were extracted from this site on 30 April 2024.

4. Non-English written documents were machine translated into English from various EU languages including Danish, Flemish, French, Finnish, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Swedish. Relevant translations are available on the FEANTSA website: https://www.feantsa.org/en/epoch-practice/national-strategies

5. All of the relevant documents which were collected in this research and were found to be up-to-date, relevant, formal and published documents – as defined by the Member States, were analysed using a homelessness ID template (see appendix B).

6. IDs of Member States (which we learned through this research have a strategy or another relevant policy document, or those IDs having comments) were sent to Member States' EPOCH delegates, as well as to FEANTSA's Administrative Council (AC) members for their comments, which helped shape the final IDs presented below.

7. Some non-EU strategies were collected through an internet search as well as personal communications with homelessness professionals and researchers.

These materials form the basis for the writing of this analysis.

Ethical approval was granted for this research by the ethical committee of the School of Social Work, in Sapir College.

2024 State of Play of

European Union Member States Homelessness Strategies

This chapter presents European Union Member States homelessness strategies as we recorded them up to July 2024.

In addition to national strategies, information about homelessness strategies on regional and municipal level is quite fragmented. As can be seen from the information detailed below in the Member States' IDs, even though we asked respondents to detail information about regional strategies – in addition to the federal and national levels – we presume that the input is scarce relative to the actual existence of such strategies. We may be quite sure that the information about regional and municipal level strategies presented here is very partial. Further, as we have seen during the writing of this paper, the various 'strategies' need to be analysed carefully to determine whether these are all-inclusive homelessness strategies, or some other kind of policy document. This examination is outside the remit of this paper. Therefore, even though 14 Member States are presented as having a homelessness strategy or another extensive policy in table 1 below, they are not all the same kind of documents. Further, we do not comment here on their effectiveness, implementation, nor on their quality. The table should be read primarily as a guide to which countries report having a national strategy or another extensive policy, not an overview of how effective public policy on homelessness is.

Below you may find the list of EU Member States and their national homelessness strategy status as it arises from the four sources of this survey:

Table 1: National Homelessness strategies in European Union Member States – The State of Play in 2024

European Union Member State	Is there an established national homelessness strategy in the Member State according to this research's analysis?	Comments
Belgium	Yes	A federal poverty action plan within which there is some mention of homelessness
Denmark	Perhaps	An agreement between political parties inside and outside of the government regarding several initiatives to promote the construction of social housing to counteract the trend towards urban segregation, as well as a fundamental change in the efforts to combat homelessness
Finland	Yes	A decision regarding the programme to end long-term homelessness
France	Perhaps	A five-year Housing First plan (Phase II)
Ireland	Yes	A housing strategy within which there is a dedicated chapter regarding homelessness
Germany	Yes	A federal level action plan to tackle homelessness
Greece	Yes	A national homelessness action plan
Netherlands	Yes	An action plan on homelessness
Poland	Yes	A social services strategy with a small chapter about homelessness, in which there are quite a few relevant pointers, though the strategy is focused mainly on services rather than housing
Portugal	Yes	A national strategy for the integration of homeless people. The strategy's orientation is of support, with lack of focus on housing
Romania	Yes	A national strategy on the social inclusion of homeless people. There is a lack of a permanent-long-term housing component
Slovakia	Yes	A national concept and action plan for preventing and ending homelessness
Spain	Yes	A national strategy to combat rough sleeping, with a strong focus on services and less on housing
Sweden	Yes	A strategy to tackle homelessness
Italy	Out-of-date	An out-of-date national plan for social intervention and services, which includes a national plan for interventions and social services to combat poverty. Apparently the renewed 2024-2026 plan is underway
Austria	No	
Bulgaria	No	
Croatia	No	
Cyprus	No	
Czechia	No	
Estonia	No	
Hungary	No	
Latvia	No	
Lithuania	No	
Luxembourg	No	
Malta	No	
Slovenia	No	

The presentation in this table does not guarantee the presented strategies effectiveness nor quality.

This table is based on the collection of data from four sources: **1)** This research; **2)** An unpublished earlier research endeavour regarding homelessness strategies developed by the European Commission (2023); **3)** DG EMPL's homelessness website; **4)** OECD Country Notes.

Illustration 1: National Homelessness strategies in European Union Member States – The State of Play in 2024

Homelessness strategies in European Union Member States - The state of play in 2024

- ■ EU Memeber States with a national homelessness strategy
- ■ EU Member States with NO national homelessness strategy
- ■ Another document - A political agreement
- ■ Another document - A Housing First plan
- ■ Out-of-date document

ICELAND

RUSS

FINLAND

NORWAY

SWEDEN

ESTONIA

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

BELARUS

IRELAND

DENMARK

UNITED KINGDOM

NETHERLANDS

POLAND

UKRAINE

BELGIUM

GERMANY

CZECHIA

LUXEMBOURG

SLOVAKIA

MOLDOVA

FRANCE

SWITZ.

LIECHT.

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

SLOVENIA

CROATIA

ANDORRA

ITALY

SAN MARINO

BOSNIA & HERZ.

SERBIA

BULGARIA

MONACO

PORTUGAL

SPAIN

VATICAN CITY

MONTENEGRO

KOSOVO

NORTH MACEDONIA

ALBANIA

TÜRK

GREECE

CYPRUS

ISR

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

TUNISIA

● MALTA

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EU Member States homelessness strategies and other policy documents IDs

Below are the EU Member States homelessness IDs.

For some countries we found a general housing or anti-poverty strategy which may include a homelessness strategy, or other policy tools dealing with homelessness. For other countries we found specific homelessness strategies. Others yet have some other kind of policy document which relates to homelessness. Finally, some Member States did not present any document with which we could form a homelessness ID. Note that all the IDs presented below are mostly based on formal documents which were presented by the Member States themselves as related to current relevant homelessness policy. These documents were presented to the European Commission, DG EMPL, the OECD (and collected from their data sources) and/or to us in this research.

Austria

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Comments:

Vienna has a Homelessness Assistance Strategy (2022).

Salzburg and Graz are developing strategies.

Belgium

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2022

Name of document: **4e plan fédéral de lutte contre la pauvreté et de réduction des inégalités**

https://www.mi-is.be/sites/default/files/documents/4e-plan-federal_0.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: 4th federal action plan to combat poverty and reduce inequality

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Belgium-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

A federal poverty action plan

Length of the original Plan: Especially the chapter - "Access to housing and the fight against homelessness" – about 2 pages within the whole 54 pages of the plan.

[Please note that this **4th federal action plan to combat poverty and reduce inequality** is analysed here as it is the current up-to-date relevant Belgian document for the sake of this ID. As we are writing this ID, Belgium is in the process of updating its cooperation agreement on homelessness (see more about this in the 'Comments' section below), which once published will be a more relevant homelessness policy document in relation to our discussion here.]

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Actions regarding the chapter – "Access to housing and the fight against homelessness":

1. As part of the settlement allowance for the homeless, consider whether it would be appropriate to include additional allowance for each minor and adult child.
2. Increase the number of Housing First support trajectories - housing solutions in the major cities, in particular through support from the National Lottery.
3. European Platform against Homelessness: Translating the European Platform against Homelessness into operational objectives Lisbon Declaration of 21 June 2021 on Homelessness and its Eradication by 2030 and contribute to the results of the European Platform against Homelessness.
4. Organise a regular national census (one every two or four years, in coordination with the local censuses coordinated by the King Baudouin Foundation and the Brussels census), with inter-federal funding where the various authorities contribute to a specific part of such an initiative (federal, regional, local authorities, etc.).
5. Simplify appeals in the event of refusal of provisional registration for the underprivileged.
6. Harmonise the use of the reference address via a single circular to guarantee access rights to all.
7. Review the cooperation agreement on homelessness.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First

Comments:

According to Belgian Federal Public Programming Service - Social integration, the federal anti-poverty plan 2022-2024 is linked to the current, expiring government. A review is scheduled for September 2024.

Further, the Federal Public Programming Service - Social integration comments that the federal government has a coordination role but few levers of its own in the fight against homelessness. The main competence can be situated in developing and implementing an adequate and performing social protection system, thus situated at the level of prevention.

In addition to the federal poverty action plan reviewed in this ID, there are a few other relevant documents:

1. **The cooperation agreement on homelessness** – referred to in action 7 above.

An agreement on legislative cooperation between the Federal State, the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region, the Brussels-Capital Region, the Flemish Community, the German-speaking Community, the French-speaking Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region, the Joint Community Commission and the French-speaking Community concerning homelessness.

The five main objectives of this declaration are:

1. No one is sleeping rough because of the lack of accessible, safe and suitable emergency shelters;

2. No one stays in emergency or temporary accommodation for longer than is necessary for a successful transition to permanent housing;

3. No one leaves an institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care home) without adequate accommodation;

4. Evictions must be avoided as far as possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution, if necessary;

5. No one is discriminated against because they are homeless.

This agreement is still being reviewed.

2. Flemish Region - **Action Plan to Combat Poverty (VAPA) 2020-2024**

1 page within the wider Flemish Poverty Action Plan (Item 7.5.8. "We develop and implement an aligned and comprehensive legislative plan to prevent and combat homelessness"). The plan is related to the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health, Family and Poverty Reduction.

3. Walloon Region - **Poverty Exit plan**

Axis 2 of the plan: Access to housing for all, includes section 2.5: Setting up a coordinated Walloon strategy to get people out of homelessness (p. 49). Amongst other things this section states that at this stage there is no coordinated exit strategy in Wallonia to support Housing First – Housing-led and some other relevant facilities for people experiencing homelessness.

According to the Walloon Public Service, Interior and Social Action, Wallonia has set up various schemes to prevent and combat extreme poverty. Some projects have been identified as priorities because they are strategic and structuring. These include the establishment of the *Observatoire Wallon du Sans-Abrisme* (Walloon Observatory on Homelessness). The role of this observatory is to define and coordinate guidelines for eradicating homelessness.

Specifically, its missions are as follows

- Centralisation: to provide Wallonia with a body that brings together operators in the field, scientific experts, experiential experts and the relevant authorities.

- Expertise: To provide multi-disciplinary expertise on the issue of homelessness, based in particular on the collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

- Evaluation: Evaluate measures to combat homelessness, such as Housing First.

- Providing advice: Drawing up and proposing guidelines for action to combat homelessness.

4. Brussels-Capital Region - **Masterplan to end homelessness**

This is a proposal for Brussels' strategy for overcoming homelessness by 2030 through prevention, support and housing.

According to Brus'help this strategic plan is made up of 35 concrete measures structured around four key areas:

- Strengthening prevention: Preventing people from becoming street-involved, in collaboration with related sectors.

- Promoting rapid action: Reducing the time spent homeless, to prevent chronicity and additional problems.

- Optimise support: Provide appropriate support for each problem, including addiction and mental health problems.

- Combating institutional violence and injustice: Introducing ethical procedures to avoid invasive or paternalistic interventions.

Bulgaria

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Comments:

In its National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promoting Social Inclusion 2030 homelessness is mentioned. Bulgaria accepts in this strategy the complex nature of homelessness and its multifactorial determinants, as well as the need for a comprehensive approach, including access to social housing or good quality housing assistance, shelter and services for homeless people to promote their social inclusion, including integrated cross-sectoral services.

Croatia

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Cyprus

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Czechia

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Comments:

In its Social Inclusion Strategy 2021–2030 Czechia states that one of the most at-risk groups in terms of poverty and social exclusion are the homeless and those at risk of housing deprivation.

This target group has been addressed separately in the Concept of Preventing and Tackling Homelessness Issues in Czechia, which was adopted on 28 August 2013, in Government Resolution No. 666, which was valid until 2020. Some of its priorities have been

incorporated into this Social Inclusion Strategy. This Resolution approved the ETHOS functional definition (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) as a basic starting point to deal with the homeless and people at risk of losing their housing.

In chapter 4.6 of the Social Inclusion Strategy, that deals with access to housing, homelessness is mentioned quite a lot. At the end of the chapter, two objectives are laid out:

1. Increasing the availability of housing for people at risk of exclusion from housing or those having lost it
2. Reducing the risk of housing loss and homelessness through comprehensive and individualised support using multi-disciplinary co-operation of the staff of the Labour Offices, municipalities, NGOs and social services.

According to the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, it is also responsible for the Concept of Social Housing of the Czech Republic 2015-2025. The goal of the Concept is a wider offer of housing for people threatened by loss of housing or social exclusion and for people who spend a high percentage of their income on housing. Furthermore, the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs submitted to the government the "Bill on Support in Housing", which was approved by the government in June 2024. The Bill is aimed at improving the availability of housing for persons who are at risk in the housing market. Now the Bill is being discussed in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic.

Denmark

Year of publication/Relevant years: 26 November 2021/ period 2022-2035

Name of document: **Fonden for blandede byer – flere billige boliger og en vej ud af hjemløshed**

https://www.regeringen.dk/media/10834/aftaletekst-aftale-om-etablering-af-fonden-for-blandede-byer.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: The mixed cities fund - More affordable housing and a way out of homelessness

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Denmark-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

Agreement between the government (Social Democrats), Danish People's Party, Socialist People's Party, Unity Party and Christian Democrats regarding a number of new initiatives to promote the construction of social housing to counteract the trend towards urban segregation, as well as a fundamental change in the efforts to combat homelessness.

Length of the original Plan: 31 pages

Governance: In order to support the municipalities' efforts to make ambitious plans for the establishment of more social housing and ensure that the initiatives achieve the greatest possible effect, the Minister of the Interior and Housing will enter into cooperation agreements with the largest municipalities on the establishment of more social housing, which can be achieved by using the allocated pools. The pools are allocated on the basis of specific applications and objective criteria.

Funding: The parties have agreed to establish *the Mixed Cities Fund*, which will receive a total of DKK 10 billion in the period 2022-2035 from the New Build Fund. The fund aims to contribute to the creation of mixed cities through the promotion of affordable social housing by funding a range of new housing initiatives.

A total of DKK 141.3 million will be allocated in the years 2022-2025 to support the overall restructuring of efforts to combat homelessness based on the Housing First approach.

Monitoring: The parties agree that the Ministry of the Interior and Housing will prepare an annual status report on the implementation of the allocated funds in the Mixed Cities Fund.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.: The goal is to significantly reduce the number of homeless people and end long-term homelessness.

More affordable and sustainable housing:

- ➢ Sustainable social housing
- ➢ New land purchase loan scheme to support new social housing
- ➢ Conversion of commercial and residential rental properties into social housing
- ➢ Densification with new social housing
- ➢ More student housing and dormitories
- ➢ Faster construction of social housing

Specifically regarding homelessness:

- ❖ Establishment of a Task Force on homelessness to strengthen the municipalities' case

management and efforts in the homeless area and contribute to a strengthened implementation of Housing First

- ❖ An analysis of services, capacity and target groups in the shelter sector
- ❖ Establishment of a national partnership of stakeholders to monitor and discuss the development of the number of homeless people and the efforts in the area
- ❖ Pool for civil society's work to support the path to and transition into housing for people experiencing homelessness
- ❖ Continuation of trials with citizen-controlled budgets for socially vulnerable citizens
- ❖ Pool for care places for people experiencing homelessness after hospitalisation
- ❖ Intensive case management for homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness
- ❖ Strengthened legal advice for homeless organisations nationwide
- ❖ Supporting communities for formerly homeless people in the transition to independent living
- ❖ Temporary support for capacity adjustment at night cafés
- ❖ Expansion of activities at Gadens Stemmer.

Expected outcomes:

The parties note that the scheme will make it possible to provide more than 25 per cent social housing in an area if there is a local desire for this.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan: The parties wish to emphasise that this agreement marks the implementation of the Housing First approach in a Danish context, where accessible affordable housing combined with adequate social housing support in own homes are the cornerstones.

Reference to specific populations: Elderly and young people; people with disabilities.

Estonia

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Year of publication/Relevant years: 19.12.2023 / 1.1.2024-31.12.2026

Name of document: **Asettamispäätös: Ohjelma pitkäaikais-asunnottomuuden poistamiseksi vuoteen 2027 mennessä**

https://api.hankeikkuna.fi/asiakirjat/56446e01-3616-4634-9633-0b265c19d350/25a4e067-9ace-4762-a717-4c2d5352909a/ASETTAMISPAATOS_20231221134422.PDF

English translation of the name of the document: Establishment Decision: a programme to end long-term homelessness by 2027

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Finland-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

A decision regarding the programme to end long-term homelessness

Length of Plan: 5 pages

Governance: The Ministry of the Environment guides and finances the acquisition, construction and renovation of housing. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health directs and finances social and health services.

Funding: Permanent funding will be allocated to eradicate long-term homelessness by 2027. In addition, housing units for the long-term homeless will be financed by The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) investment grants for special groups and subsidised loans. Participating cities and wellbeing services counties (hyvinvointialueet) are eligible to apply for funding for investments to end long-term homelessness and for the development and introduction of social and health services. Funding will be allocated on the basis of plans to be drawn up under the programme.

Monitoring: The programme has a steering group to manage the programme and monitor progress on the ground. The Steering Group provides direction and support for the practical development work. The Steering Group may invite experts to attend hearings.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

- Long-term homelessness will be eradicated by 2027.

- Affordable and state-subsidised housing, including the necessary small subsidised housing units, is available in sufficient numbers for the long-term homeless in the programme cities. The subsidised housing services meet the needs of the users.

- Cities and wellbeing services counties have joint implementation plans to end long-term homelessness.

- At municipal and welfare region level, a wide network of cooperation is in place to eradicate and prevent long-term homelessness.

- A joint approach has been established between cities, wellbeing services counties and the state to consolidate the work against long-term homelessness to a level that will prevent long-term homelessness from rising after the programme period.

Expected outcomes

1. The programme cities and wellbeing services counties will jointly develop a plan to eradicate long-term homelessness by 2027. The plan should include at least the following:

   a. A description of the situation of long-term homelessness and key measures to address potential problems.

   b. The roles and division of labour between the city and the wellbeing services county in ending long-term homelessness by 2027.

   c. The number of existing housing units and housing units allocated to the long-term homeless and the number of new housing unit places needed to meet the target for depreciation, and measures to ensure appropriate allocation of housing to the long-term homeless.

   d. A model for the provision of adequate and integrated social and health services for people living in residential units.

   e. Actions to support the transition of residents of housing units to lighter services

   f. Ensuring low-threshold mobile and outreach social and health services to improve the situation of people in need of strong housing support in order to end long-term homelessness.

2. Strengthening cooperation between those working on long-term homelessness. Participating cities and wellbeing services counties will jointly set up a network of homelessness co-workers, including organisations and service providers, in their area.

The government programme will also build a cross-government homelessness prevention package that will enable early identification of the risk of homelessness and the provision of assistance to prevent homelessness.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Adequate supply of housing and work to prevent evictions.

Promote the creation of supported housing units for young people.

Reference to specific populations: Young homeless people.

France

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2023-2027

Name of strategy: **Deuxième plan quinquennal pour le Logement d'abord (2023-2027): Agir, prévenir, construire, pour lutter contre le sans-abrisme** https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/20.06.2023_DP_Logement_dabord2.pdf

English translation of the name of the strategy**:** Second five-year plan for Housing First (2023-2027): Act, prevent, build, to combat homelessness

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-France-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

A five-year Housing First plan

Length of the original Plan: 53 pages

Governance

At the national level, an interministerial delegation (DIHAL) is responsible for the design, the coordination, the implementation and the evaluation of the plan. Governance has been reorganised at regional level around the integrated reception and orientation services (SIAOs

- services intégrés d'accueil et d'orientation). With their role of coordinating support, the SIAOs are tasked with developing integrated approaches to housing, employment and health, to ensure that all the obstacles to accessing housing are taken into account.

Funding

According to DIHAL the State annual budget dedicated to the public policy to fight homelessness is around 3 billion €. This includes the funding of the shelter policy and of the Housing First plan. The specific funding for the 5 years Housing First plan (2023-2027) is estimated at 160 million € for the 5 year plan (around 30 million annually added to the annual (recurrent) budget of around 3 billion €).

Monitoring

This second Housing First plan includes an assessment of the first Housing First plan.

Further, according to DIHAL as the Housing First plan is a government's priority reform, its results are monitored monthly, with specific reporting by the Prefects on the achievement of their fixed targets

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

The aim is to increase the number of solutions that give the most vulnerable households access to housing. The three pillars of this plan are:

1. Producing and mobilising appropriate and affordable housing solutions for households in very precarious situations

2. Helping people stay in their homes, preventing breakdowns and preventing situations from deteriorating

3. Speeding up access to housing and offering support pathways combining housing, employment and health

Expected outcomes

❖ Creation of 30,000 new rental places in the private sector
❖ Creation of 10,000 new supported housing units
❖ Accrediting 25,000 new social housing units

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First.

Reference to specific populations: Young people; women who are victims of violence; people suffering from mental health problems; people in custody; Roma.

Germany

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2024

Name of the document: **Gemeinsam für ein Zuhause - Nationaler Aktionsplan gegen Wohnungslosigkeit 2024**

https://www.bmwsb.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/Webs/BMWSB/DE/veroeffentlichungen/wohnen/NAP.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1

English translation of the name of the document: Together for a home - National action plan to tackle homelessness

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Germany-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

An action plan against homelessness

Length of the original Plan: 48 pages

Governance

Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) has taken the lead for the overall process.

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ), the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), the Federal Ministry of the Interior and for Home Affairs (BMI) and the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, Integration and Anti-Racism are also involved.

Funding

Monitoring

The Steering Committee of the National Forum on Homelessness will discuss annual programmes resulting from the guidelines of the National Action Plan against

Homelessness and the contributions of the stakeholders involved, report regularly to the

federal government on their implementation and make recommendations for implementation to the federal, state and local governments, the private sector and civil society.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

The aim is to overcome homelessness by 2030.

Guidelines:

Prevention

1. Ensure that every homeless person and person at risk of homelessness receives a suitable housing offer by 2030
2. Homelessness is avoided whenever possible with the help of coordinated prevention measures.
3. If homelessness cannot be prevented, the legal entitlement to regulatory accommodation applies.
4. For homeless people with unclear insurance status, access to health insurance and healthcare is being reviewed and clarified in the interests of those affected.
5. Combat discrimination against homeless people.
6. Homeless people will be able to participate in the digital administrative services of the public sector and take care of everyday tasks online.

Procedure

7. Cooperation, networking and the exchange of knowledge between those involved will be facilitated and strengthened through appropriate platforms.
8. Transparency is created by means of existing and additional data collection, analyses, surveys and scientific studies.
9. The cooperation and follow-up of the jointly set targets and the resulting measures are linked to a clear allocation of responsibilities.

Expected outcomes

➢ A competence centre for the prevention of homelessness will be set up at

federal level at the Federal Office for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial

Development (BBSR).

- ➢ Establish a federally owned institution against homelessness
- ➢ Three specialised working groups will be set up in the first half of 2024:
    - o Specialist working group on the prevention of homelessness
    - o Specialist working group on housing supply
    - o Expert working group on assistance, assistance systems and emergency care

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

"Housing First" and other housing-led services

Reference to specific populations: Young people; women; people with a (family) history of immigration and especially non-German EU citizens

Comments:

- ❖ Access to municipal (emergency) accommodation is also granted to homeless EU citizens under the same conditions as Germans.

- ❖ Berlin has a Masterplan to Overcome Homelessness by 2030 (2021)
- ❖ Cologne has a Concept to Combat Homelessnes (2024)
- ❖ North Rhine-Westphalia has a State initiative against homelessness (2019)
- ❖ Saarland published its Housing shortage in Saarland - Further development of housing and homeless assistance (2023)
- ❖ Saxony published a regulation to prevent and eliminate housing emergencies (2021)
- ❖ Thuringia is in the process of developing a homelessness strategy

Greece

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2023-2027

Name of document: **ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΟ ΔΡΑΣΗΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΝΤΙΜΕΤΩΠΙΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΣΤΕΓΙΑΣ 2023 - 2027**

[No link provided]

English translation of the name of the document: National action plan to address homelessness 2023-2027

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

National homelessness action plan

Length of the original Plan: 75 pages

Governance

The National Action Plan was published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - General Secretariat of Social Solidarity & Combating Poverty. It has been prepared and announced, with part of its policies being implemented.

The current competent Ministry is the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family - General Secretariat for Demography and Housing.

Funding

The total cost for the implementation of the Plan's policies and actions amounts to eighty-three million two hundred and twenty thousand (83,220,000) euros. The total number of beneficiary households is estimated at six thousand four hundred and sixty (6,460). For this purpose, in addition to the state budget funds, European funding is utilized through which such policies and actions can be supported (NSPR, Recovery Fund).

According to the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family - General Secretariat for Demography and Housing, they are currently exploring additional financial resources.

Monitoring

The Action Plan will be evaluated by the end of the 1st semester of 2027 and its targets will be reset in view of the 2030 milestone

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Long-term goal: Universal and permanent addressing of housing problems for the entire population of the country. At the same time, the Plan is aligned with the European directions and priorities, which have been set to combat and eliminate the phenomenon of homelessness by 2030.

The 7 axes of the Plan:

1) Prevention
    a. Social Housing pilot program
    b. Extension of the Social Housing program
    c. *Coverage* program
    d. Creation of a mechanism to prevent homelessness

2) Crisis intervention
    a. Improvement of existing and financing of new structures
    b. Program to support street work actions and coordination of actions between agencies

3) Reintegration
    a. *Housing and Work Program* for the homeless
    b. Inclusion of homeless people in the special social groups of the Public Employment Service
    c. Sports and cultural activities

4) Register - Recording
    a. Action to record the homeless on a regular basis

  b. Electronic Register of Homeless Agencies and Structures and Register of Housing Requests

5) Education – Information
  a. Training of professionals on issues of dealing with homelessness
  b. Guide to the implementation of emergency response measures
  c. Homelessness website
  d. Information-awareness campaign to combat the stigma of homelessness

6) Institutional interventions
  a. Establishment of a National Committee for Planning and monitoring policies for the lack of housing
  b. Creation of an institutional framework for the operation of Social Leasing Agencies
  c. Search for sponsorships in the context of utilizing Corporate Social Responsibility programs

7) Action Plan Evaluation
  a. Control of effectiveness indicators of implemented policies

Expected outcomes

➢ Reintegrate 600 households/800 beneficiaries every two years under the *Housing and Work for the Homeless* program
➢ Provide at least 1,000 private homes as social housing to young people aged 25-39 under the *Coverage* program.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First

Social housing

Housing and Work for the Homeless program.

Reference to specific populations: **Individuals or families** living on the street; **people accommodated in** Social Hostels for the Homeless, Sleeping Hostels, addressed to the Open Day Centers for the Homeless; **women alone or with their minor children** who are accommodated in Hostels for Women Victims of Violence; **families and individuals** who have been registered as homeless or in a precarious housing situation by the social services of the Municipalities or Community Centers or other public or private bodies related to the provision of services to vulnerable or special social groups of the population; **young people; LGBTI+ community; unemployed; Vulnerable Social Groups.**

Hungary

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Comments:

Budapest has a Metropolitan Strategy to Reduce Homelessness (2022).

Ireland

Year of publication: 2021

Name of the document: **Housing for All: A new Housing Plan for Ireland**

https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ef5ec-housing-for-all-a-new-housing-plan-for-ireland/

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

This is a **housing strategy** within which there is a dedicated chapter regarding homelessness.

Length of Plan: 160 pages.

The dedicated chapter (2, p. 47) regarding homelessness: **Pathway to Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion** – includes 25 pages.

Governance: Housing for All is a whole-of-Government Plan, encompassing numerous policy areas across the four pathways to a sustainable housing system. It has required and will continue to require a deep level of collaboration across Government with a strong focus on implementation.

According to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) an overarching governance structure has been established in the Department of the Taoiseach to oversee implementation. There are a number of agencies which work in collaboration with the Department of Housing such as the Housing Agency, Housing Finance Agency, the Housing First National Office etc. A Commission on Housing was also established to examine the housing system in Ireland and has reported to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Funding: Excess of €20bn in funding through the Exchequer, the Land Development Agency and the Housing Finance Agency for 5 years (for the whole plan not only for people experiencing homelessness). According to the DHLGH budget 2024 provides an allocation of €242m for homeless services, to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness with emergency accommodation and the supports they need to exit homelessness to a tenancy.

Monitoring: A unit in the Department of the Taoiseach has been established with responsibility for ongoing monitoring and oversight of the implementation of the Plan.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Four pathways for a Sustainable Housing System:

1. Supporting home Ownership and Increasing Affordability

2. Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion

3. Increasing New Housing Supply

4. Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

Specifically regarding homelessness: work towards eradicating homelessness by 2030

Expected outcomes: Building an average of 33,000 new homes every year.

Specifically regarding homelessness:

• Increased Housing First targets to 1,200 tenancies over five years for homeless people.

• Establish a new National Homeless Action Committee.

• Expand Street Outreach Teams for rough sleepers nationwide.

• Individual Healthcare Plans

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan: Increasing Housing First Targets to 1,300 tenancies. Delivering 90,000 social homes by 2030. This includes over 10,000 social housing homes each year for five years, with an average of 9,500 of those being new-build social homes.

Reference to specific populations: Older people; people with a disability; young people – see also comments below.

Comments:

Progress in relation to the Housing for All strategy is tracked and published quarterly: gov - Housing for All - Quarterly Progress Reports (www.gov.ie).

The DHLGH details some specific achievement to note in relation to homelessness below:

➢ **Housing completions achieved:**

   o   2022: 29,851 new homes (specific year target for 2022 was 24,600)

   o   2023: 32,696 new homes (specific year target for 2023 was 29,000)

➢ Further, DHLGH notes the **National Homelessness Action Committee**, which was established in December 2021. The committee is chaired by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and comprises representatives from 22 organisations with a role in addressing homelessness, including Government Departments, state bides and NGOs. NHAC meets on a quarterly basis. gov - National Homeless Action Committee (www.gov.ie)

- ➤ Ireland has also published: **Housing for All – Youth Homelessness Strategy 2023-2025**, for young people aged 18-24, with three aims:
  - o Prevent young people from entering homelessness
  - o Improve experiences of young people accessing emergency accommodation
  - o Assist young people as they leave homelessness

    https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/69597-youth-homelessness-strategy/

  - o At its halfway point an 18-month Progress Report was published: https://assets.gov.ie/300602/127ca7f6-77a3-4505-95b0-0fc73a9c5190.pdf

  - o According to DHLGH one of the main actions in the Strategy provides for the development of a pilot model of a housing-led intervention for young people, Supported Housing for Youth (SHY). The pilot is due to launch in Dublin in the summer of 2024 and aims to support up to 25 young people to move out of homeless emergency accommodation and into their own accommodation with wraparound supports.

- ➤ Finally, the current **Housing First National Implementation Plan 2022-2026** was published in late 2021. gov - Housing First National Implementation Plan 2022-2026 (www.gov.ie)

  - o Following the launch of the Plan DHLGH notes the following:

    - ▪ 560 Housing First tenancies were created up to the end of 2023. This exceeded the target of 551 set out for the first two years of the plan.

    - ▪ The most recent data shows that to the end of Q1-2024, 615 Housing First tenancies were created under the current Plan and 997 individuals were in a Housing First tenancy.

Italy

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2021 / 2021-2023 – This document is out-of-date. However, apparently, the development of a new strategy for the years 2024-2026 is underway, in co-operation with the regions.

The information below relates to the 2021-2023 document only, and includes only partial information due to the fact that the only document we can currently analyze is out-of-date.

Name of document: **Piano Nazionale degli Interventi e dei Servizi Sociali 2021-2023**

https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Documents/Piano-Nazionale-degli-Interventi-e-dei-Servizi-Sociali-2021-2023.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: National Plan for Social Intervention and Services 2021-2023

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Italy-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

A national plan for social intervention and services, which includes a national plan for interventions and social services to combat poverty

Length of the original Plan: 115 pages

Governance

The Protection and Inclusion Network chaired by the Minister of Labor and Social Policies, includes representatives of the central authority (Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Infrastructure and transport, Department for family policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers), of the Regions (one member for each of the regional councils and autonomous provinces, designated by the President) of the Municipalities (20 members designated by the National Association of Municipalities of Italy - ANCI) and INPS.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First, independent living.

Comments: There is also another strategy regarding the National Inclusion and Poverty Eradication Programme 2021-27. Another possibly relevant document is the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

Latvia

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Lithuania

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Luxembourg

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Malta

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Netherlands

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2023-2030

Name of document: **Dutch National Action Plan on Homelessness: Housing First 2023-2030**

English version:

https://www.eersteenthuis.nl/binaries/eersteenthuis/documenten/publicaties/2023/4/13/housing-first-engels/Dutch+National+Action+Plan+on+Homelessnes-+Housing+First+2023-2030.pdf

[Nationaal Actieplan Dakloosheid: Eerst een Thuis]

Dutch version:

https://open.overheid.nl/repository/ronl-bb529bd58adc8061e5c058d2fe9671197ba6244f/1/pdf/nationaal-actieplan-dakloosheid-eerst-een-thuis.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

An Action Plan on Homelessness.

Length of the original Plan: 58 pages

Governance

- ❖ Administrative meetings every two years between ministers and councillors.
- ❖ The coalition on homelessness will continue to play a role in implementation even after this plan has been developed.
- ❖ Short lines of communication between Central Government, municipalities and other coalition partners to ensure:
  - 1 .Central Government is aware of local issues
  - 2 .National developments can be explained verbally to the local partner
  - 3 .More context can be provided around progress at regional level
  - 4. If there is insufficient progress on the objectives, the next steps can be explained.

Funding

There is 450 million euros available each year to implement this plan (according to the plan's internet site: https://www.eersteenthuis.nl/nationaal-actieplan-dakloosheid).

There are additional sources of money for issues related to housing, poverty and debt.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a key part of this Action Plan and focuses on two aspects: understanding the numbers of homeless people and people who are at risk of becoming homeless in the Netherlands (quantitative) and understanding the progress that is being made in the desired transition: from temporary accommodation to prevention and Housing First. This transition must contribute to the ultimate objective of ending homelessness by 2030.

The objectives of the Action Plan are revised annually at administrative level where necessary.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Prevention and housing are the two main pillars of this Action Plan.

Objectives:

- ❖ Homeless people do not sleep rough due to a lack of accessible, safe and appropriate emergency or interim accommodation.
- ❖ Nobody stays in an emergency or interim facility longer than is strictly necessary for a successful transition to a sustainable stable housing solution.

- ❖ Nobody is discharged from an institution (prison, hospital, care institution) without an offer of appropriate stable accommodation, i.e. not temporary accommodation (homeless shelter or hostels).
- ❖ Evictions are avoided wherever possible and nobody is evicted without help to find an appropriate sustainable housing solution.
- ❖ Nobody is discriminated against due to their homeless status.

Six guiding principles as national compass:

1. Preventing homelessness is always better than temporary accommodation or rehousing
2. Housing is a human right
3. Respect for people's own choice and control
4. Separation of housing and care
5. Support focuses on recovery
6. Support is flexible and tailored to individual needs

Six action lines:

1. Strengthening of financial security
2. Prevention
3. Housing First
4. Strengthening of implementation practice: coordination of all aspects of life, speed and the human dimension are key
5. First-hand knowledge throughout the policy cycle, at local and national level
6. Additional input for specific target groups

Expected outcomes

Ambition: By 2030, everyone has a home.

The Action Plan is committed to achieving a paradigm shift in the way in which we approach and deal with homelessness, while changing the focus to prevention and 'first a house, then recovery'.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Transition from temporary accommodation to Housing First.

Reference to specific populations: Young people; LGBTIQ+; EU citizens; people with mild cognitive impairment; women; people with highly complex problems; children.

The action Plan **does not** relate to people who do not have a residence permit, they are covered by immigration policy.

Comments:

Following Action 1 in Item 3.1.2 - Monitoring of the transition – below is a link to the dashboard to monitor the objectives of the plan (in Dutch): https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/07e38001-7d1b-4579-b689-2d4feb8300fb/file

According to the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the action Plan does not relate to survivors of violence, and there are separate facilities and policies to address sexual and gender-based violence.

Further, according to this Ministry, 43 regions in the Netherlands are working on bringing their regional plans in line with the national strategy, aiming to redirect policy solutions towards prevention and Housing First instead of emergency shelter and temporary reception facilities.

Poland

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2022 / until 2030 (with an outlook until 2035)

Name of document: **Strategia rozwoju usług społecznych**

https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WMP20220000767/O/M20220767.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: Strategy for the development of social services

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Poland-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

A social services strategy, with a dedicated strategic objective (#5) that deals with homelessness.

Length of the original Plan: 133 pages

Governance

A team for the implementation was established in the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. The following entities are noted as implementers of strategic objective #5:

➢ Minister responsible for social security
➢ Minister responsible for economy, construction, planning, land use and housing
➢ Minister of Finance - with regard to the planning of funds for the implementation of the course of action
➢ Voivodship self-governments (regional level), within the framework of the tasks resulting from the legal acts currently in force
➢ Local government units (municipalities and counties), within the framework of the tasks arising from the legislation currently in force
➢ Social economy entities - in accordance with the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit activity and voluntary work
➢ Civil society organisations - in accordance with the law of 24 April 2003 on public benefit activity and voluntary work

Funding

Indicative sources of funding related to objective 5 directly targeting homelessness are as follows:

➢ State budget
➢ Local authority budgets
➢ EU funds.

Monitoring

The monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy's assumptions will be carried out in partnership and with the participation of all stakeholders, especially civil society organisations and social entities directly involved in the areas indicated in the document.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

The Strategy is a strategic document indicating objectives and directions for the development of social services.

Vision: To prepare a system for the delivery of social services to people in need of support in their daily functioning, in particular due to old age, disability, mental health problems, homelessness, in such a way that they can function safely and independently in their place of residence for as long as they wish, and to ensure that children and young people deprived of parental care are cared for in a family or family-like setting.

Strategic objectives:

1. Increase the participation of families and familial forms of foster care in the care and upbringing of children
2. To build an effective and sustainable system providing social services to people in need of support in their daily functioning
3. Social inclusion of people with disabilities giving them the opportunity to live in the community regardless of their level of disability
4. Create an effective system of social services for people with mental disorders
5. Creating an effective support system for people in crisis of homelessness and people threatened with homelessness

Action lines for strategic objective 5:

❖ Implement a system of coordination and standardisation of social services to prevent homelessness
❖ Supporting people experiencing homelessness
❖ Development and implementation of solutions for transition from institutional support to support in the form of housing by:
  1) Developing and supporting various forms of housing as dedicated tools addressing the homelessness crisis;
     The development of supported housing, including statutory regulation, with a basket of services for people in crisis of homelessness;
  2) Changes to the planning and management of the municipality's housing stock taking into account the prospect of assisted housing, including the use of vacant properties;
  3) Developing and implementing housing solutions for people at risk of homelessness and those emerging from homelessness in need of support to maintain housing, including with the involvement of Social Tenancy Agencies;
  4) Development of homelessness prevention programmes based on the 'Housing First' model or others;
  5) Improving the competences and qualifications of staff providing support to people in crisis of homelessness, especially support provided in housing;
  6) Converting existing facilities for people in crisis of homelessness into combined supported housing or into intervention-type facilities.

Expected outcomes

1. A comprehensive system of support for people at risk of homelessness and experiencing homelessness will be created.

2. Support measures will prevent people in crisis of homelessness from being placed in temporary shelters or minimise the length of stay in such institutions.

3. The idea of independent living will be implemented, supported by assisted housing.

4. Remaining in a shelter institution will be the choice of the beneficiary from the support system and, at the same time, the last, least desirable link of support.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Supported housing; Housing First

Reference to specific populations: Elderly, young people, children, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, people experiencing homelessness.

Comments:

A group of about 100 experts from local authorities, civil society and academia seem to have drafted in 2020-2021 a deinstitutionalisation strategy for Poland, under the auspices of its previous government. This draft was ultimately rejected. The new government, elected in autumn 2023, hinted about its will to return to this draft to develop it into an operational strategy. If that happens, this current strategy may be replaced.

Portugal

The Portuguese Government approved this strategy in April 2024.

In August 2024 the new Government decided to carry out a review process, with the aim of having the new strategy in force in January 2025.

Until it is approved the previous strategy is maintained.

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2024 / 2025-2030

Name of document: **Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 61/2024 - Aprova a Estratégia Nacional para a Integração das Pessoas em Situação de Sem-Abrigo (ENIPSSA) 2025-2030.**

https://pessoas2030.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2024/04/RCM-n.61.2024_02.04.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 61/2024 – Approval of the National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People 2025-2030.

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Portugal-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

National Strategy for the Integration of People Experiencing Homelessness

Length of the original Plan: 15 Pages

Governance

ENIPSSA 2025-2030 will have the following structures:

a) Interministerial Commission.

It is coordinated by the member of the Government responsible for the area of labour, solidarity and social security, and is made up of a representative from each of the following sectoral areas: Planning; Internal Administration; Justice; Education; Cheers; Infrastructure; Housing; Equality and Migration; Territorial cohesion.

b) Executive Management.

It is made up of the Executive Manager for ENIPSSA 2025-2030, appointed by the member of the Government responsible for the area of labour, solidarity and social security, and the members appointed by the Technical Commission for Follow-up, Monitoring and Evaluation (CtAMA).

c) Technical Commission for Accompaniment, Monitoring and Evaluation (CtAMA).

It is made up of public and private bodies, representatives of people experiencing homelessness, and people of recognised merit who consider themselves to be an asset in preventing, combating and intervening in this phenomenon.

d) Homelessness Planning and Intervention Centre (NPISA).

NPISAs are created whenever the phenomenon warrants it, are coordinated preferably by the city council, and are made up of a representative of public bodies, namely those supervised by the members of the government responsible for the areas of equality and migration, justice, internal administration, education, employment, social security, health (in the areas of primary health care, mental health and addictive behaviour), and public works; and other public or private bodies working in the area that wish to establish integrated work, and which are recognised as competent to do so by all the other partners.

Funding

Monitoring

Creating a Technical and Follow-up, Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (CtAMA) to replace the Strategy Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group (GIMAE) (See above Governance C).

Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the structures that make up ENIPSSA 2025-2030, in a multi-method approach, using information systems, their own instruments for collecting and processing data, evaluations carried out by external organisations, consultations with people at risk of losing their homes or experiencing homelessness, or other methodologies that may prove necessary during the implementation of the Strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation reports will be developed to present and publicise the results of monitoring and evaluation over the ENIPSSA 2025-2030 period, based on the definition of Action Plans.

Action Plans will be drawn up for the 2025-2026 and 2027-2030 programme periods, with the final evaluation of the Strategy taking place in 2030.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Vision: No one experiences homelessness, let alone remains on the streets for lack of alternatives.

Ensure that the population has access to support measures and services to promote the prevention of homelessness or, whenever it occurs, integrated support in the different dimensions (biopsychosocial and environmental), so that, through quality care, their social inclusion is achieved.

Mission: To create and implement an ecosystem close to people at risk or experiencing homelessness, guaranteeing fair access, in quantity and quality, to support services, through territorialised responses and personalised intervention.

Strategic axes:

Axis 1 - Promoting knowledge of the phenomenon of people at risk or experiencing homelessness, information, awareness-raising and education.

Axis 2 - Definition and implementation of an integrated warning and prevention system for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, promoting early intervention.

Axis 3 - Strengthening intervention to promote the inclusion of people at risk or experiencing homelessness.

Axis 4 - Coordination, monitoring and evaluation of ENIPSSA 2025-2030.

Expected outcomes

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Prioritising a housing orientation, centred on facilitating access to stable solutions, preferably permanent ones, and adapting them to the person's life project.

Reference to specific populations: Elderly; people in situations of dependency; people with disabilities; people in need of mental health care; people with alcohol and/or illicit substance use and dependency; LGBTI+ people; the Roma population; the migrant population.

Comments:

A homeless person is defined regardless of nationality, documentary status, racial or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, socio-economic status, physical and mental health status and disability status.

Lisbon developed a Municipal Plan for Homeless People 2024-2030

Romania

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2022-2027

Name of the doument: Strategia națională privind incluziunea socială a persoanelor fără adăpost pentru perioada 2022-2027

https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/Anexa_HG_1491_2022.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: National strategy on social inclusion of homeless people for the period 2022-2027

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Romania-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

Romanian Government decision regarding the approval of the National Strategy on the social inclusion of homeless people for the period 2022-2027 and the Action Plan for the period 2022-2027.

Length of the original Plan: 72 pages

Governance

The implementation mechanism involves a multi-year framework plan. In order to streamline implementation, the planned measures will be operationalised through annual action plans. These action plans will be drawn up by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, based on the contributions of the institutions/entities involved, and will be approved by order of the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity.

Funding

The financing of the measures foreseen in Strategy, as well as those in the Action Plan, shall be carried out within the limits of the approved annual budgets.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the implementation will be coordinated at the level of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity through annual evaluations, as well as an ex-post evaluation.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

General Objective - to increase the social inclusion of homeless people by providing social protection appropriate to their needs.

Specific objective 1: Prevent the increase in homelessness at national level based on the principle "No one left behind".

Specific objective 2: Ensure appropriate, multidisciplinary and integrated intervention for the social inclusion of homeless people.

Specific objective 3: Prevent post-intervention relapses.

Specific objective 4: Improve policy coordination at national/local level with regard to the target group homeless people.

Expected outcomes

Specific results of **the prevention component**:

   a) Making the social assistance system for homeless people more efficient.

   b) Improved/implemented mechanisms for the long-term management of the problems of people at risk of homelessness.

   c) Improved system of public policy development in the field of social inclusion of homeless people.

Specific **intervention component** results:

   a) Increased access to social services.

   b) Financial instruments and technical guidelines to support integrated homelessness intervention developed.

   c) Specific implemented programmes for the integration/reintegration of homeless people into the labour market.

   d) Increased resilience in the social services/social assistance system;

Results specific to **the post-intervention relapse prevention component**:

   a) Monitoring activities implemented with the aim of preventing relapse for people who have benefited from support measures to overcome vulnerability.

   b) Increased degree of medium- and long-term employment of formerly homeless people who have moved out of vulnerability;

   c) Increased number of information/promotion campaigns targeting homeless people.

Results related to improved policy coordination at national/local level:

   a) Legislative/regulatory measures to strengthen roles and coordination/cooperation system developed and implemented.

   b) Evidence-based policies to prevent and combat social exclusion of homeless people developed and implemented.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

   ➢ Increasing the supply of social housing for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness […] the allocation of social housing for a minimum of 10% of homeless people annually.

> ➢ Development and implementation of "Housing First" pilot programmes.

Reference to specific populations: Young people leaving the child protection system; people who become unemployed; older people who do not have a full contribution period; people with mental illnesses/different addictions.

Comments:

Homelessness and the risk of homelessness are primarily addressed by the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2015-2020, approved by Government Decision No. 383/2015 and the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2022-2027, approved by Government Decision No. 440/2022. This strategy focuses on social housing and improving the accessibility and quality of the existing housing stock - as the main solution to both the risks of homelessness and housing exclusion.

The National Housing Strategy for 2022-2050, approved by Government Decision no.842/2022, nominates the target group of homeless people separately and treats housing for this vulnerable group as a priority. The government aims to develop programmes for the development of social housing, and other programmes.

Slovakia

Year of publication/Relevant years: National Concept – 2022 ; Action Plan - 2024

Name of the document 1: **National Concept for Preventing and Ending Homelessness**

English Version:

https://www.mpsvr.sk/files/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/prevencia-ukoncovanie-bezdomovstva/national-concept-preventing-ending-homelessness.pdf

[Národná koncepcia prevencie a ukončovania bezdomovstva]
Slovak version:
https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/prevencia-ukoncovanie-bezdomovstva/narodna-koncepcia-prevencie-ukoncovania-bezdomovstva.pdf

Name of the document 2: **Action Plan for 2024-2026 to the National Concept for Preventing and Ending Homelessness by 2030**

English Version:

https://www.mpsvr.sk/files/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/prevencia-ukoncovanie-bezdomovstva/action-plan-2024-2026-national-concept-preventing-ending-homelessness-2030.pdf

[Akčný plán na roky 2024 – 2026 k Národnej koncepcii prevencie a ukončovania bezdomovstva do roku 2030]
Slovak version:
https://www.mpsvr.sk/files/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/prevencia-ukoncovanie-bezdomovstva/akcny-plan-roky-2024-2026-k-narodnej-koncepcii-prevencie-ukoncovania-bezdomovstva-do-roku-2030-ap-nkpub.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

National concept and action plan for preventing and ending homelessness

Length of the original Plan: National Concept – 94 pages; Action Plan – 22 pages

Governance

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Funding

In the context of the new multi-annual financial framework, the full potential of EU funds for preventing and ending homelessness needs to be exploited.

The action plan details sources of funding and indicative budgets proposed for each activity.

Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in cooperation with stakeholders, defined as the actors involved in the implementation of the individual measures, or partners and other relevant actors concerned. Monitoring and evaluation will focus in particular on assessing the progress of the implementation of the measures against the values of the output indicators. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in line with the time horizon of the strategy on at least a biennial basis or as identified needs arise. A report on the implementation of the measures and tasks resulting from the Strategy will be submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic as an information document. Tasks that cannot be completed in 2024-2026 or are to be

continued beyond 2026 will be implemented in the Action Plan 2027-2030 after review. Beyond the formal monitoring, a meeting of promoters and cooperating partners will be convened at least semi-annually to provide information on the ongoing implementation of activities.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

The global objective is in line with the Lisbon Strategy:

End homelessness in Slovakia by 2030 so that -

- No one is sleeping rough due to lack of accessible, safe and adequate emergency accommodation;

- No one stays in emergency or transitional accommodation for longer than is necessary for a successful transition to permanent housing;

- No one has been released from a prison, hospital, social services facility or other institution without being offered suitable housing;

- Forced evictions are prevented as far as possible and, if they do occur, assistance is made available to secure suitable housing where necessary;

- No one is discriminated against for being homeless.

Specific objectives:

1. **Prevention** - To create a functional homelessness prevention system which, through individual measures, will reduce the number of people at risk of homelessness
2. **Housing** - To Increase the physical and affordable housing of people from vulnerable groups to prevent and end homelessness
3. **Health Issues** - Improving access to health care for People without a Home (PwH) through the provision of full health care (not only emergency), including preventive health care and access to effective and affordable medicines for PwH, while maintaining equity of access. Ensuring equal access to health care for PwH - establishing and promoting services that ensure overcoming barriers to access to health care, namely outreach medicine, low-threshold clinics, respite care, etc. Developing systematic cooperation between social providers of crisis intervention services and health care providers in assisting PwH, or integration of health and social services for PwH to ensure multidisciplinary and continuous care leading to ending homelessness.
4. **Employment** - To improve access of people without a home to the labour market, to active labour market measures and to employment, including in the social economy, with a view to employment or labour market activation, and eliminating the exploitation of the disadvantaged position of people without a home for illegal work.

5. **Social Security, Social Services and Social Protection** - To improve access and availability to individual social benefit instruments, availability of social services or social protection measures and increase the efficiency of the social assistance system.
6. **Administration** - To introduce measures to facilitate people without a home's access to public administration institutions
7. **Education and Public Sensitisation** - To raise the standards of work with people without a home in key professions, sensitising society, raising awareness of homelessness and implementing preventive measures to eliminate the negative impacts of homelessness on those at risk
8. **Data and Statistics** - Creating a source of regularly updated administrative data on homelessness and PwH in the Slovak Republic, to obtain more detailed evidence on the prevalence and forms of hidden homelessness, risk factors for falling into homelessness, and success factors for exiting homelessness, in order to plan services more effectively and to regularly evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided to people at risk of housing loss and PwH.

The Action Plan details measures to meet all the objectives of the Concept.

Expected outcomes

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First

Reference to specific populations: People with physical or mental illness; women; people of pensionable age; young adults who leave the Centres for Children and Families after reaching the age of majority.

As the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 has been adopted, this group of people is NOT specifically addressed by this current Concept.

Slovenia

There is no national homelessness strategy.

Comments:

Slovenia is currently developing a homelessness strategy, which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2024.

Spain

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2023 / 2023-2030

Name of the document: **National Strategy to Combat Homelessness in Spain 2023-2030**

English Version:

https://www.mdsocialesa2030.gob.es/derechos-sociales/servicios-sociales/Personas-sin-hogar/docs/Strategy_PSH20232030.pdf

[Estrategia Nacional para la lucha contra el sinhogarismo en España 2023-2030]
Spanish version:
https://www.mdsocialesa2030.gob.es/derechos-sociales/servicios-sociales/Personas-sin-hogar/docs/EstrategiaPSH20232030.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

National Strategy to Combat Rough Sleeping

Length of the original Plan: 106 pages

Governance

The Strategy's approach offers a response led by social services in collaboration with housing departments, and it will be coordinated with other relevant areas, specifically social inclusion and social security, employment, health and equality.

The General State Administration (GSA) assumes the commitment to implement the lines of action and measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the Strategy. It has the highest level of responsibility:

- Clear leadership from the GSA in promoting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Strategy.

- Identification of funding sources for the deployment of the Strategy and redirection of existing funding.

- Coordination on the issue of homelessness between the housing and social services departments at all levels of government.

The General Directorate for Family Diversity and Social Services of the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs and Agenda 2030 will assume the leadership and coordination regarding homelessness policies at national level.

The General State Administration recognises the need to collaborate with the Autonomous Communities and local authorities, insofar as the deployment of some lines of action falls under their competence (at regional and/or local level):

- Cooperation with the Autonomous Communities is enshrined in the Framework Agreement by the Territorial Council of Social Services and the System for the Autonomy and Care of People with Dependency.

- The collaboration of local authorities is also essential for the implementation of actions associated with prevention and early detection, the transformation of the intervention models, community services, experimentation and innovation, and the non-criminalisation of poverty in the public space, among others.

The governance of the Strategy will be based on the following pillars:

1. Horizontal coordination between the departments and executive centres of the GSA.

2. Cooperation between public administrations (GSA, Autonomous Communities and local authorities)

3. Participation and involvement of the third social action sector.

4. Involvement of people with first-hand experience of homelessness.

Funding

The Strategy will be structured with its own funds from different administrative levels within the existing budgetary availabilities, both from the General State Budget and from allocations at the regional and municipal levels, as well as support that will be sought from European level funds.

Monitoring

A dual monitoring and planning exercise is envisaged to monitor the Strategy, which will take the form of operational plans and biennial progress reports to monitor the progress and implementation of the operational plans.

Two evaluations are proposed:

a) Interim evaluation in 2028; b) Final evaluation of the Strategy in 2030

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

The Strategy aims to contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the Lisbon Declaration. Being aware of the ambitious nature of the Declaration, the national strategic framework will focus on preventing and eradicating rough sleeping and promoting deinstitutionalization.

The Strategy has the following general objectives:

1. Eradicate rough sleeping
2. Prevent rough sleeping

Focus areas:

Prevention, promotion of autonomy, adapted and personalised responses, governance and knowledge,

The Strategy principles: Prevention, personalization, deinstitutionalisation, housing orientation, gender and intersectional approach, innovation and public responsibility.

Expected outcomes

1. The number of rough sleepers is reduced by 95%.
2. A 95% reduction in the number of rough sleepers who have been without their own accommodation for 0 to 6 months.

Further, there are many more detailed expected results for all focus areas.

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing Led programmes, including Housing First.

Reference to specific populations: Women; LGBTIQ+ people; immigrants.

Comments:

The Strategy will act in coherence and coordination with existing public policies which include the following:
  - ❖ The State Plan for Access to Housing 2022-2025.
  - ❖ The National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023, et seq.
  - ❖ The Action Plan on Addiction 2021-2024.

Consideration should also be given to the reforms that will contribute to achieving the Strategy's objectives:
  - ❖ Right to Housing Act, as referred to in C2, R3, RTRP.
  - ❖ Consolidation of the cohesion, equity and universality of the health system (C28, R3, RTRP).
  - ❖ National Deinstitutionalisation Strategy for Good Community Living - under development- (C22, R1, RTRP).

Within the regional and local context, a number of Autonomous Communities and municipalities have drawn up plans or strategies specifically focused on preventing and tackling homelessness. The following have been approved among the Autonomous Communities:
  - ❖ Plan for the Care of Homeless People in Galicia 2019-2023.
  - ❖ Inclusion Strategy for Homeless People in Cantabria 2022-2025.
  - ❖ Strategic Plan for Homeless People in Castilla-La Mancha 2022-2025.
  - ❖ Framework for Action to Tackle Homelessness in Catalonia 2022-2025.
  - ❖ Strategy for the Care of Homeless People in Andalusia, 2023-2026.
  - ❖ 2nd Basque strategy against serious residential exclusion 2024-2028.

In addition, in 2022, the Spanish Government and the Autonomous Communities adopted a framework agreement to provide a solution to homelessness within the Territorial Council of Social Services and the System for the Autonomy and Care of People with Dependency.

It is also worth highlighting the drafting of municipal plans to prevent and tackle homelessness, which are generally driven by the municipal social services, in Barcelona, Bilbao, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Madrid, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Valencia, Zaragoza, etc.

Sweden

Year of publication/Relevant years: 2022-2026

Name of the document: **Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet 2022–2026**

https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/5a5f795a1db144ec8dfe36cd60114ed7/regeringens-strategi-for-att-motverka-hemloshet-2022-2026.pdf

English translation of the name of the document: Government strategy to tackle homelessness 2022-2026

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/epoch/National-Strategies/Homelessness-Strategy-Sweden-Original2024.pdf

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

Strategy to tackle homelessness

Length of the original Plan: 21 pages

Governance

The actors for Objective 1: County administrative boards and the Swedish Enforcement Authority

The actor for Objectives 2, 3 & 4: National Board of Health and Welfare

Funding

The Government is allocating SEK 40,000,000 (approximately 3.5 million euros) per year, provided that the Riksdag (the supreme legislative body of Sweden) allocates the funds.

Monitoring

The National Board of Health and Welfare is to produce on 31 May 2027 a final report on how the work on the homelessness strategy has been carried out and how initiatives within the framework of the strategy have contributed to achieving the objectives set.

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Purpose: Clarify the direction of the Government's efforts to reduce the number of adults and children experiencing homelessness and to prevent people from becoming homeless.

Objectives:

1. Homelessness will be prevented – mainly through the prevention of evictions
2. No one should live or work on the streets
3. Housing First should be implemented nationally
4. Strengthen the social perspective in urban planning

Expected outcomes

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Housing First

Reference to specific populations: Children; young people; the elderly.

Questionnaire results

This research paper is based, amongst other things, on a Qualtrics questionnaire that was sent during March and April 2024 to 82 people: **52** European Union Member State **delegates to the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness,** representing all EU Member States; **23** European **professionals working in the field of homelessness**, representing 20 Member States; and **7** European **homelessness researchers**.

Respondents completed the questionnaire between the dates: 18 March 2024 to 7 May 2024.

We recorded 56 questionnaire responses, out of which 46 were found to be valid for use in this research, as they contained relevant data. The remaining 10 recorded responses were ones in which respondents entered the questionnaire but did not fill in any relevant information. These latter responses were deleted, so they would not affect the results in a misleading way.

The respondents of the 46 valid responses include Member States' delegates, homelessness professionals and researchers from 23 Member States, excluding Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Poland - states from which there were no responses to the survey.

Most respondents to the questionnaire (54%) were Member States' government officials: 3 of them (7%) were from federal government, the majority - 20 people - (43%) were from national government, while 2 people (4%) were from local government. The other 46% of respondents mainly come from civil society (15 – 33%), and academia (7 - 15%). Some respondents filled in more than one affiliation.

A total of 33 respondents (72%) stated that there is an established strategy for addressing homelessness in their country or in any of its regions, while 13 (28%), said there is no such strategy.

Out of those who stated having a strategy 22 (73%) speak about *a specific homelessness strategy*, while the others speak about a homelessness strategy which is *included as part of a general housing strategy* (4 people – 12%), or *a general anti-poverty strategy* (3 – 9%), while two others (6%) speak of some other kind of policy document.

This data should be taken with caution. We note that the results of this research - in relation to the specific data received in the questionnaire - suggest that more people think they have a strategy than what this research tells us. One good example for this is the fact that sometimes we received contradicting responses to the same question from respondents from the same Member State; including specifically regarding the question of if there is or there isn't a homelessness strategy in the Member State. While one respondent answered that their country has a homelessness strategy, the other wrote that: *It can be seen as programmes and policies to transform and change homelessness services according to the Housing First approach, but it is not as such labelled a homelessness strategy*. This may happen due to lack of knowledge, or differences in understanding of the subject, or definition of terms – such as 'strategy'.

Table 2:

According to respondents their homelessness strategies include the following :

	Percentage
Goals	97%
Housing First	87%
Data collection	81%
Prevention	77%
Sheltered people	74%
Governance structure	74%
Monitoring	74%
Housing-led	68%
A legal framework	68%
Funding	68%
Un-sheltered people	55%
Emergency accommodation	55%
A lead agency	48%
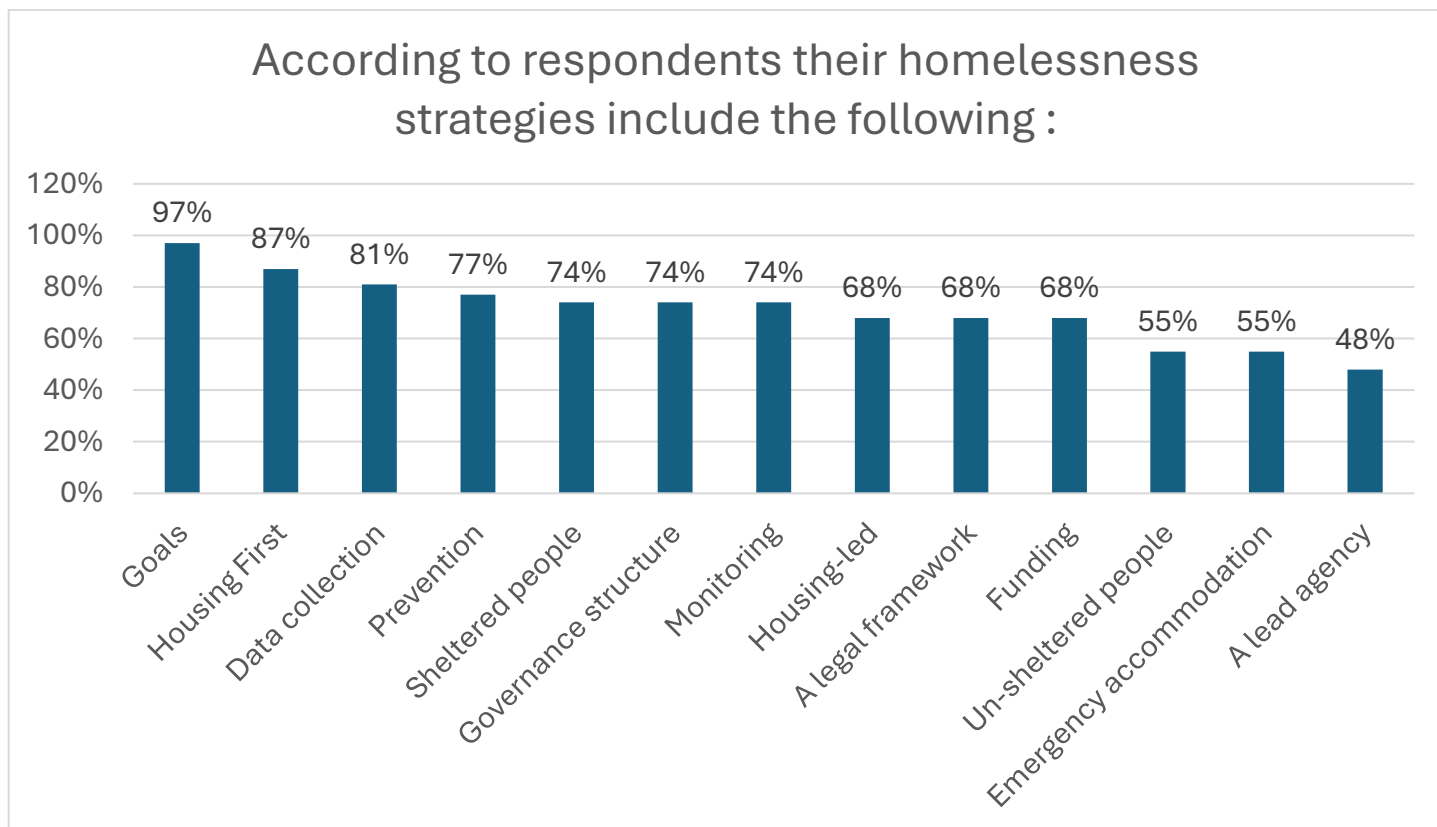
Almost all (97%) of respondents who claimed to have a strategy said that the strategy includes **goals**. 87% of respondents reported that their strategy includes **Housing First**, while 68% noted it includes **some other form of permanent long-term housing-led initiatives**. 84% stated that the **development process of the strategy included collaboration involving stakeholders at central, regional and local level**. 81% of respondents reported that their strategies include **data collection**, while 77% noted they contain **prevention**. 74% of respondents stated that their strategies include **sheltered people experiencing homelessness**, while 55% of them reported they include also or only those who are **un-sheltered.** Respondents also mentioned that their strategies include **emergency accommodation** (55%), as well as **emergency support** (52%). 74% of respondents stated that their strategies had a **governance structure**, while 48% reported they had a **lead agency.** 68% of respondents stated that their strategies had **a legal**

framework. 68% of respondents reported strategies having **funding**, while 74% reported that they included **monitoring**.

Twenty eight respondents answered the question about the strategy's implementation: 75% of them reported that the strategy is being implemented, 14% stated that it is not being implemented, while the others mentioned that the strategy is about to be implemented, or that they did not know anything about its implementation.

Regardless of whether one has a strategy or not, we asked if, in the respondents' opinion, the implementation of a homelessness strategy contributes to resolving the issue of homelessness.

Out of the 44 who answered this question 86% (38 people) thought it does, 7% (3) thought it doesn't, while another 7% did not know.

Table 3:

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion, does the implementation of a homelessness strategy contribute to resolving the issue of homelessness?

Don't know
7%

No
7%

Yes
86%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Don't know
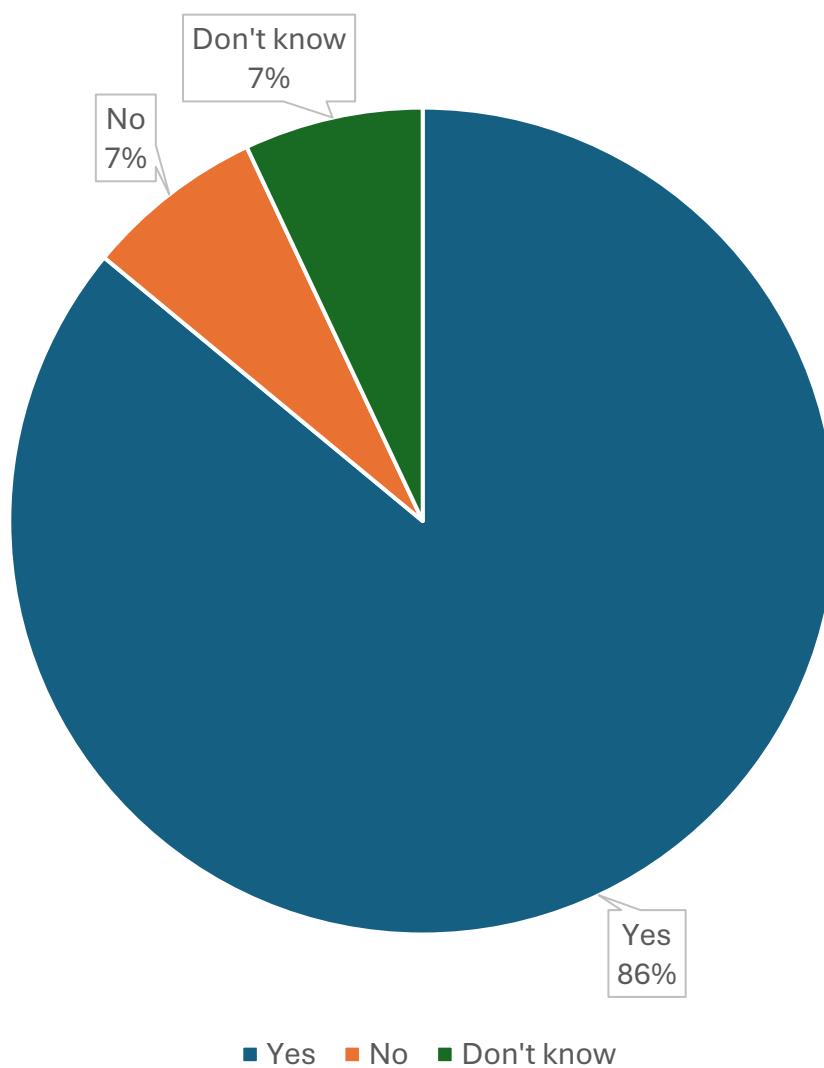
Below you can find some of the comments we got from the respondents regarding **the effectiveness of a strategy in addressing and resolving homelessness:**

- *It provides clarity as to the objectives and goals of the government in relation to homelessness and actions undertaken to resolve it.*

- *Without having a national strategy there would not have been clear targets by 2030 and no administrative agreement signed and committed to by all stakeholders [...] Also the strategy was made by a broad coalition of stakeholders including people with lived experience. Without this strategy we would not have had a strong coalition.*

- *With no strategy there is no hope of ending homelessness, with a strategy there is at least hope.*

- *In my opinion, if we would have a strategy, we could try solving homelessness less chaotically, to foresee a wider range of measures and services to solve homelessness. Also, I guess there could be goals, criteria, which could allow to track if the country is solving the problem or not.*

- *Without Political will, the strategy is just a document. Also, without the implementation of a structured plan, the strategy is just a guideline document. So, without political will to solve the poverty issue, there will be no base for ending homelessness.*

- *The effectiveness of a strategy addressing homelessness is linked to the availability of updated and robust data on homelessness and the implementation of a monitoring system on both the use of resources and the result achieved (reduction of people in condition of homelessness, improvements in the life conditions, improvements in the services provision, etc.).*

Below you can find some of the comments we got from the respondents regarding the **advantages of having a strategy:**

- *It sets out a clear plan of action to direct policy aimed at dealing with the complex issue of homelessness.*

- *That the homeless population is been recognized and with the strategy can be made targeted measures to reduce and end homelessness. Otherwise, you can't know what is the situation and data in homelessness.*

- *Building/promotion of awareness of the issue, common understanding of homelessness, promotion of common/strategic measures to address the issue, promotion of cooperation of different stakeholders to comprehensively address homelessness (national/local level, civil society, different line ministries)*

- *Ideally, a national strategy expresses the fact that overcoming homelessness is a cross-departmental and cross-actor joint task and an obligatory task of the welfare state. It raises the profile of the problem and anchors it in the political agenda.*

Below you can find some of the comments we got from the respondents regarding the **obstacles to the construction and implementation of a strategy:**

- *Housing market (lack of rental housing stock) and lack of housing policies. Dispersed responsibility between different actors and levels.*

- *Transforming knowledge into concrete action - Cooperation between the various actors at the different levels of a federal state.*

- *Coordinated national public policies need to address structural factors like the housing crisis, growing numbers of people with limited access to housing or employment rights, rental evictions, and individuals leaving child welfare care without solutions.*

- *Implementation is rough and bumpy sometimes [...] municipalities can decide HOW they will work on homelessness and also HOW they spend the money provided by central govt. This requires frequent monitoring and visits, talks, also at the higher level. Besides this, there are not incalculated factors such as the war in Ukraine, refugees, EU migrants, i.e. all other groups who are in need of (social) housing. Basically, a competition between groups.*

- *It is politically difficult to get a strategy framed around outcomes (e.g. half homelessness by 20xx) and without that objective the actions are not calibrated to the scale of the issue. Homelessness is complex and the collaboration of a wide range of state and non state actors over time is very difficult to achieve. It is easier to develop a strategy than to develop an effective strategy. Finally, strategies appear to belong to particular governments or administrations, so there is very little interest in properly exploring what worked and what didn't. The Government wants to say it all worked and the opposition (incoming government) wants to say it all failed.*

- *Lack of resources to implement measures, as well as lack of staff who work with homeless people.*

- *The lack of administrative capacity and the lack of financial resources… lack of funding, lack of will at different government departments to change*

legislation. Enormous resistance at different levels to offer priority to homeless households in the allocation of housing.

- *Unfortunately, not all relevant stake holders - due to political tension, the Ministry is not on board thus no real funds have been allocated, and no national legislation to be affected.*

- *Availability of affordable housing. Narrow focus on segments of homeless population (people staying in shelters and homeless hostels) without much attention to young couch surfers and rough sleepers.*

- *A primary obstacle is the lack of adequate and long-term solutions after emergency shelters.*

- *Shortage of affordable housing.*

Below you can find some additional comments:

- *I think some form of broad political consensus needs to underpin a strategy. It cannot belong to one particular department or even Government, it needs to be something that NGOs and opposition parties have contributed to and collectively wish to see delivered.*

- *It´s always good to have a "what works" process from other countries, but to have an impact there has to be a good description on "what works" in your own national context, according to your own housing and welfare systems.*

A proposal for a good homelessness strategy

Having collected the existing international academic knowledge regarding homelessness strategies, as well as having analysed the European Union's existing national and other strategies, this proposal for a good homelessness strategy aims to give practical hands-on guidelines for anyone who wants to develop or renew a homelessness strategy. The proposal contains all of the relevant components gathered through this research, which we believe are important for a good and successful strategy, which has an enhanced potential for comprehensive implementation. It is intended for policymakers as well as government officials, civil society representatives, academics and people with lived experience of homelessness, and anyone else that will be undertaking the task of developing or renewing a homelessness strategy.

As this proposal is based on the review of the literature, and on homelessness strategies found in this research, most of which are European, context-specific and local elements should be implemented into this skeleton to make it operational in your country, region or municipality.

The nine homelessness strategy building blocks of the OECD Toolkit (which is due to be published by 2025), provide guidance to support policymakers throughout the policy design, implementation and management phases. The toolkit explains the relevance, operational issues, guidance, and good practices related to these building blocks, which are all represented in the skeleton presented here. In this chapter we are using these building blocks, among other elements, as a starting point from which to delve into detail and offer ways to enact them.

The Spanish homelessness strategy outlines the European context in which strategies are written in a very clear way, and may serve as a good reference when writing the introduction

to any EU homelessness strategy (see especially pp. 10-14). So do the Greek action plan, and the Slovak national concept.

Below you will find some **key issues and points that should be part of any good and effective homelessness strategy** that may also be implemented in a comprehensive manner:

1. Legal framework

2. A human rights approach to homelessness

3. Mission, objectives, targets and goals

4. Collaboration

5. Implementation

6. Governance

7. Funding

8. Data collection

9. Prevention

10. Temporary accommodation

11. Permanent long-term housing solutions

12. An integrated approach

13. Time frame

14. Monitoring and evaluation

Below we will discuss each of these issues succinctly. For elaboration, please refer to the literature review chapter above.

Legal framework

The legal framework of the strategy should be stated, giving the strategy a legal basis which may be binding.

A human rights approach to homelessness

A human-rights-based approach to realising the right to housing and other rights for people experiencing homelessness should be reflected in the strategy.

Mission, objectives, targets and goals

Mission: Provide people experiencing homelessness with decent healthy lives and wellbeing.

Primary objective: Ending homelessness.

Secondary objective 1: Delivery of long-term permanent housing.

Secondary objective 2: Prevention.

Target 1: Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

Target 2: Reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation.

Goal 1: Collection of data.

Goal 2: Building and securing enough long-term permanent housing.

Collaboration

The strategy should be developed and implemented in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders: different tiers of government at federal, national, regional and local level, as well as quasi-governmental and non-governmental agencies, including experts by lived experience of homelessness.

Implementation

Implementation should be at the heart of the strategy during the development stage, including clear guidance for its implementation.

Governance

Preferably one single agency should take the lead in the fight against homelessness. This agency will coordinate all the relevant agencies taking part in this fight.

It is advisable to address, from the outset, the potential pitfalls of coordination among different service providers and institutional systems in delivering services on the local level, such as social services, health services, criminal services, housing authorities, etc.

Funding

There should be significant investment in permanent housing, adequate financing mechanisms and increased budgets and funding. Funding should be appropriate and realistic to achieve the mission, objectives, targets and goals of the strategy.

Data collection

The strategy should include a firm commitment to an on-going collection of measurable and reliable data about homelessness and available housing options**.**

Prevention

Strategies should be prevention oriented. This means they should strive to:

➢ Reduce poverty.

- ➢ Provide affordable housing.

- ➢ Reduce evictions.

- ➢ Identify people at risk of homelessness.

- ➢ Mainstream homelessness prevention across systems like welfare, health, migration, criminal justice and child prevention.

Temporary accommodation

Strategies should ensure an adequate level of temporary accommodation, ensure that shelter is dignified, and that it can fulfil its intended function as emergency, short-term provision. The length of time that people stay in temporary accommodation should be shortened, to eliminate bottlenecks between temporary and permanent accommodation.

Permanent long-term housing solutions

Strategies should incorporate a housing-led approach. This should include Housing First and/or other such programmes.

An integrated approach

In addition to prevention, temporary accommodation and permanent long-term housing solutions, homelessness strategies should incorporate an integrated approach, which brings together all relevant fields in managing homelessness while striving to end it.

Time frame

Strategies should consider committing to ending homelessness by the year 20XX. In the absence of such a commitment, strategies should state a firm timeline that coincides with clear goals.

Monitoring and evaluation

Strategies should incorporate annual or bi-annual reporting on progress, including various indicators, such as numbers of people experiencing homelessness, numbers of long-term permanent housing units built – and those converted from short-term to long-term – and numbers of evictions, etc.

Finally, a cardinal question is for whom the strategy is being developed. In this context, the strategy developers may want to consider the following non-exhaustive list of specific target populations that may deserve special attention:

➢ Sheltered people experiencing homelessness

➢ Un-sheltered people experiencing homelessness

➢ People experiencing homelessness who do not access services

➢ Revolving door clients

➢ Roma

➢ Asylum seekers

➢ Refugees

➢ Internal EU migrants

➢ Undocumented migrants

- People with no legal right to reside in a certain jurisdiction

- Child welfare-involved families and youth

- LGBTQI+ people

- People with chronic health conditions and co-occurring disorders

- People with current or past criminal justice system involvement

- People with disabilities

- People with HIV

- People with mental health conditions

- People using drugs

- Pregnant and parenting youth

- Women

- Survivors of domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, and human trafficking

- Children (younger than 12)

- Youth (age 12-17)

- Young adults (age 18-25)

- Families with minor children

- Older adults (age 55 and older)

Discussion and summary

> After WWII […] European countries managed to address difficulties far deeper than what Europe has to face now, with far fewer means. The only glass ceiling is our own laziness to imagine, cooperate and solve issues instead of managing them. The glass ceiling is our lack of ambition, our collective bitterness […] It just needs political will, and we are the people, so we are the will. Enough now - let's go, let's break the ceiling! (Uhry, 2015: 20).

We started this paper with the international housing crisis, with which we will also start its concluding section. In 2018 the total number of people living in slums and informal settlements worldwide surpassed 1 billion. This global number is estimated to grow to 3 billion by 2030 (United Nations Statistics Division, 2019: 44). Europe is affected as the rest of the world by this phenomenon, and some of the growth is expected to take place in its refugee camps, Roma camps and other traveller settlements, and substandard housing, etc (Kuffer, 2023). People living in such precarious housing conditions may be defined as experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness according to the ETHOS definition of homelessness and housing exclusion advanced by FEANTSA.

The Gijon Declaration was signed by EU ministers responsible for housing and urban development on November 14th, 2023. In their statement, the ministers recognise the importance of continuing the work to ensure access to decent and adequate housing in the European Union, as well as a sufficient supply of affordable housing, while ensuring more sustainable, healthy and inclusive built environments. They refer to the housing crisis that

plagues Europe, made worse by the corona virus and the war in Ukraine. They emphasise the need to strengthen support for the promotion and implementation of policies that allow access to affordable housing for all. This, while expressing their desire to be ambitious regarding responses to homelessness. The Liège Declaration of March 5th, 2024, strengthens this sentiment. The La Hulpe Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights, of April 16th, 2024, mentions the need to strive for ending poverty by 2030, while reiterating the European Pillar of Social Rights being part of wider efforts to build a more inclusive and sustainable growth model, that also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In item 36 the declaration states the following:

> Homelessness remains an issue in many Member States, along with challenges related to housing affordability and accessibility […] calling for integrated strategies and follow-up. Taking into account national competences, continued action is warranted on accessible, efficient, green and affordable social housing to meet the housing needs of all, to eradicate homelessness and to promote 'a housing first' approach. We recognise the importance of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness.

The discussion of these declarations on affordable housing and social housing is important as housing is the main driver to ending homelessness. One of the questions that we need to answer is whether homelessness strategies – in themselves, or as part of a wider housing strategy, anti-poverty strategy or another strategy – are the way, or at least a brick on the path, to ending homelessness. Especially, as Ursula von der Leyen (2024), President of the European Commission, committed to support Member States in addressing the housing crisis, including by appointing "a Commissioner whose responsibilities will include housing, [whilst putting]

forward a first-ever **European Affordable Housing Plan**. This will address structural drivers, develop a strategy for housing construction, offer technical assistance to cities and Member States and focus on investment" (19).

Further, practical measures on the ground, as well as research, have been supplying us with ideas for avenues to generate more housing – apart from, of course, building more houses - including the repurposing of existing buildings and housing stock to enhance the building of new housing (see for example FEANTSA, 2019; McGuire, 2017; The empty homes network, 2021).

Whilst striving to end it, homelessness should also be managed. To achieve this, it seems that quite a few Member States are putting in place homelessness policies, and some have specific homelessness strategies, for eradicating homelessness, while also managing it whilst there are still people experiencing homelessness.

Having a homelessness strategy can be extremely useful but is not a goal in and of itself. The mere existence of a strategy does not necessarily mean "better" policies, services or outcomes. Strategies can serve different purposes at different stages in policy cycles. For example, to build a homeless system, to reform a homeless system, to trigger innovation, to unlock funding, to align stakeholders and set a policy direction. Finally, some countries with mature homelessness policies may have quite "light touch" strategies because much work was done under previous strategies.

Below are a few open questions and issues regarding homelessness strategies. You as the reader should decide for yourself if the questions and issues presented here were answered in this research paper, or whether, in your opinion, they merit more discussion and research regarding your own geographical area of residence:

A few open questions regarding homelessness strategies

❖ What is a 'homelessness strategy'?

❖ Why should we have a homelessness strategy and what is it useful for?

❖ Who are the stakeholders that should be involved in developing a homelessness strategy in your area?

  ▪ …and who are the stakeholders that should be involved in its implementation?

❖ How can we evaluate a homelessness strategy in a more elaborate way than just measuring the reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness?

❖ How can we make sure to develop a strategy that transcends governments from different political orientations, so as to not end good programmes just because the ruling party changes?

❖ Should there be an EU homelessness strategy?

❖ Does **EPOCH – the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness** serve as this EU homelessness strategy, or should there be more to it?

❖ When developing a homelessness strategy what are the roles of each of the different levels – EU, federal, national, regional, municipal, as well as civil society, and people with lived experience of homelessness?

▪ This question is relevant for the development stage of a strategy, as well as the implementation phase, with potentially different answers at each of these stages.

❖ The lead agency ideally plays an enabling role and adopts effective mechanisms for multi-level governance. The level of the political lead depends on how competences are organised in each country - when local government is on the frontline but cannot tackle homelessness effectively unless national/regional government provides a genuinely enabling framework. The question is what should be the level of the political lead?

❖ How do we shift from emergency shelter to long-term permanent housing without reducing shelter capacity at a time when there is not enough of it, and when many of the people that need it are not eligible for permanent support?

❖ Even though Housing First exists in 87% of current EU strategies, and housing-led initiatives in 68% of them, how do we enlarge the actual proportion of these services across Europe, whilst bearing in mind that there is no one size fits all approach?

<u>Are there people experiencing homelessness who are left out of the strategy?</u>

If so - how do we bring them in?

- ❖ As mentioned above, there is growing awareness that migration may have become a structural factor of homelessness (Hermans et al., 2020). According to the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) experts in 35 European countries, **"experience of homelessness may be linked to ethnicity and to migrant status** […] in more than half of the countries […] a majority of homeless people are nationals or belong to the national majority population, although in some of them there are reports of overrepresentation of some ethnic minority populations and/or of recent rising trends" (Baptista and Marlier, 2019: 43).

  Therefore, where relevant, homelessness strategies should incorporate migrants - regardless of their administrative status.

- ❖ Further, Roma people should also be included wherever relevant. In a European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network (2023) research regarding Roma access to quality and affordable housing in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, a consensus was established that, according to the ETHOS definition, most Roma experience homelessness. The research also found that there is a clear lack of data regarding Roma homelessness. The research mentions the EU Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Participation, and Inclusion which, in its discussion regarding access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services,

calls on Member States to enact "measures to provide social support and access to mainstream services for homeless Roma people" (Official Journal of the European Union, (19.3.2021): p. C 93/10, item f).

A few pointers regarding homelessness strategies:

- ❖ Implementation is key - There is a difference between good intentions – no matter how good the strategy development and structure - and implementation.

- ❖ Permanent long-term housing supply is key in any homelessness strategy.

- ❖ Consistency is important – a one time homelessness count, or a one time strategy for a limited period are not enough; people experiencing homelessness need a permanent long-term strategy or strategies to end homelessness, including monitoring and data collection.

Research and policy limitations

- ❖ While conducting this research, we encountered some states, and many regions and municipalities, that are currently developing homelessness strategies. Homelessness is a moving target (Lee, Shinn and Culhane, 2021), that changes all the time – including the responses to it, including strategies. Therefore, one of the main limitations of this paper is its temporal relevance, as strategies expire and new ones come into force all the time.

❖ We can see that mutual learning has already significantly contributed to homelessness policy developments in European contexts. Housing First may be conceived as a case in point. However, we should note that policy transfer is perhaps most usefully conceived as taking inspiration from what has worked elsewhere, whilst acknowledging and accounting for the specificities of different contexts, rather than simply reproducing.

This analysis allowed us to present EU homelessness strategies.

More work needs to be done to evaluate these strategies.

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Appendix A: The Qualtrics questionnaire

EU Homelessness Strategies Survey

Thank you very much for participating in this online research regarding homelessness strategies. Your answers will feed into a research paper on **homelessness strategies in the European Union Members States.**

This is an initiative of **FEANTSA**, in the context of the **European Platform on Combatting Homelessness.**

The survey targets a selection of national policy makers, researchers, and representatives of the homeless sector. We count on your input to ensure that all member states are covered accurately and thank you for your time.

The questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. You will be asked to provide some background information about yourself, and to answer a few short questions.
Please provide your own subjective assessment. You are not expected to be exhaustive.

Don't hesitate to provide links to relevant documents to support your answers (in any language). Responding to the questionnaire and all the questions is entirely voluntary. You may abort filling out the survey at any time.

<u>Disclaimer</u>:

Please click in the box below to approve that you agree to fill in this questionnaire and participate in the research and that you allow the lead researcher **Shmulik Szeintuch** (School of Social Work, Sapir College, survey@feantsa.org) and **FEANTSA** and its staff or any other person related to **FEANTSA** in any way to use the data you may share with us in this questionnaire in our publications, conferences, and any other media.

○ Click here if you agree and want to start the survey

Your country:

_____

Your affiliation:

☐   Federal Government

☐   National Government

☐   Regional Government

☐   Local Government/Municipality

☐   Civil society (for example: NGO)

☐   Research/Academia

☐ Other

If "Other" please specify:

_____

Is there an established strategy for addressing homelessness in your country or in any of its regions?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I don't know

The strategy is:

◯ A specific homelessness strategy

◯ Included as part of a general housing strategy

◯ Included as part of a general anti-poverty strategy

◯ Other

If "other" please specify:

_____

The strategy includes the following (you can select more than one)

☐ Goals

☐ Time Frame

☐ Legal framework

☐ A lead agency

☐ Governance structure

☐ The development process included collaboration involving stakeholders at central, regional and local level

☐ Data collection

☐ Prevention

☐ Emergency accommodation

☐ Emergency support

☐ Housing First

☐ Other permanent long-term housing-led initiatives

☐ Funding

☐ Monitoring

☐ Strategy includes SHELTERED people experiencing homelessness

☐ Strategy includes UN-SHELTERED people experiencing homelessness - People sleeping rough

☐ ⊗None of the above

Are there people experiencing homelessness who are left out of the strategy?

(e.g. Roma, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc...).

 If so, please specify:

_____

If there are multiple strategies in your area, please clarify which country or regional strategy

you are referring to in your response above.

_____

If you wish YOU MAY ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE MULTIPLE TIMES

in order TO INCLUDE COMMENTS ABOUT MORE THAN ONE STRATEGY.

You may add below as many strategy links as you want, or send by email to

survey@feantsa.org

Is there an officially adopted formal written document by the country or region?

○ Yes

○ No

Please add the relevant link to the document below.

(You may add more than one strategy link where applicable).

PLEASE ADD HERE ONLY LINKS TO OFFICIAL FORMAL HOMELESSNESS

STRATEGIES THAT WERE ADOPTED BY THE COUNTRY OR REGION.

If you do not have a link to the document, you may send it to: survey@feantsa.org

_____

Is the strategy being implemented?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other - PLEASE ELABORATE BELOW

You may include any comments regarding the implementation below if you wish.

_____

Given the existence of an ongoing homelessness strategy, at what level is the implementation

of this strategy taking place? [PLEASE EXCLUDE STRATEGIES AT THE

LOCAL/MUNICIPAL LEVEL]

☐   Federal level

☐   National level

☐ Regional level

☐ Other

If "other" please specify:

_____

If at the regional level - or state level where there is a federal government - could you please provide the name(s) of the region(s) / state(s) that have an officially adopted, formal, written strategy in place?

_____

>>>>>If applicable please add below link(s) to any additional strategy(ies) to the one you already submitted above.

If you do not have a link to the document(s), you may send to: survey@feantsa.org

_____

To the best of your knowledge, if there is currently no established homelessness strategy, is your country or any specific region within your country actively working to develop one?

○ Yes

○ No

Please specify the name of the country, state(s), region(s) that are working at the moment in order to put a homelessness strategy in place:

_____

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion, does the implementation of a homelessness strategy contribute to resolving the issue of homelessness?

○ Yes

○ No

○ I don't know

○ Other

If "other" please specify

_____

If you'd like, please provide further details on the effectiveness of a strategy in addressing and resolving homelessness.

_____

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion,

what do you consider the primary **<u>advantages</u>** of a homelessness strategy?

_____

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion,

what are the primary **<u>obstacles</u>** to the development and implementation of a homelessness

strategy

_____

Feel free to include below any additional comments you might have regarding strategies to

address homelessness that you would like to share with us.

In addition, you may send any questions to the lead researcher Shmulik Szeintuch:

survey@feantsa.org

_____

Appendix B: Homelessness ID template

[Country]

Year of publication/Relevant years:

Name of document:

[Name of the Plan] [+ Link(s) to the Plan]

English translation of the name of the document:

Is it a targeted homelessness strategy, a housing strategy, or another kind of strategy or other policy document?

Length of the original Plan:

Governance

Funding

Monitoring

Plan's vision, focus, goals, pillars or action areas etc.:

Expected outcomes

Elements of long-term permanent housing in the plan

Reference to specific populations [such as Roma, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, LGBTIQ+, women, etc.]

Comments: