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**Greek Republic**

**MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**General Secretariat of Social Solidarity  
& Combating Poverty**

**NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

**TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS**

**2023 - 2027**



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## INTRODUCTION

The National Action Plan is part of an integrated strategy for the development of a network of measures and services to prevent and address the problems of access to appropriate and decent housing, with the long-term goal of universal and permanent addressing of housing problems for the entire population of the country.

At the same time, it is aligned with the European directions and priorities, which have been set to combat and eliminate the phenomenon of homelessness by 2030. The objectives of the national action plan to deal with homelessness are highlighted and defined to a significant extent through the policies of the European Union (EU) to address homelessness, as announced for the programming period 2021-2027 and defined in Principle 19 on "Housing and assistance to the homeless" of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR).

Beneficiaries of the National Action Plan are:

- ❖ 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 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.

This National Action Plan updates the existing actions and institutional interventions, with the development of an integrated set of measures and services to prevent and deal with the problems of access to appropriate and decent housing. In the context of the medium-term expansion of horizontal measures to prevent and combat homelessness, the implementation of new policies structured around the following 7 axes is planned:

- 1) Prevention
- 2) Crisis intervention
- 3) Reintegration
- 4) Registration
- 5) Education – Information
- 6) Institutional interventions
- 7) Action Plan Evaluation

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).

## CHAPTER 1. THE CONCEPT OF HOMELESSNESS AND THE DIMENSION OF THE PHENOMENON IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

### 1.1. The concept of homelessness and the recognition of the right to residence at the European level

Homelessness and homelessness are perhaps the most extreme examples of poverty and social exclusion in society today, both as a symptom and as a cause.

The need for a rigorous and clear conceptual definition of the phenomenon of homelessness, both for the valid measurement of the populations in question and for the design of appropriate policy and the evaluation of relevant interventions, arises because of the different types and target groups of homeless people.

However, EU Member States have not adopted a single operational definition of homelessness, as the definition of homelessness is a complex and evolving process, where different individuals or groups enter and exit the homeless category for different reasons. reasons and causes.

On the other hand, FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) redeveloped an important conceptual definition of the homeless, the European Typology (ETHOS)<sup>1</sup>, which can be applied in all EU countries and classifies the homeless into four categories:

- homeless on the street (people living on the street or in emergency shelters),
- homeless people (people staying in homeless shelters, women's shelters, migrant/refugee centres, as well as people leaving institutions and/or people receiving long-term support),
- people living in precarious housing conditions (people living in precarious housing or under threat of eviction or under threat of abuse),
- people living in inadequate inappropriate accommodation (people living in unsuitable accommodation or living with too many other people in the same space).

This typology is based on the understanding of the three dimensions of the concept of shelter, namely the physical, social and legal dimensions of adequate, safe and secure shelter. In particular, housing is understood as the appropriate building in which the individual and his family have exclusive use and/or ownership (physical dimension), as the personal space in which the individual can enjoy his social relations (social dimension) and as the space for which the person has a legal title of use and/or ownership (legal dimension). Consequently, homelessness and exclusion from shelter is defined as

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>

the lack of one or more of the above components of the concept of "shelter". Two criteria can be used to clearly define homelessness: very poor housing conditions and lack of access to adequate housing. The above four conceptual categories<sup>2</sup> of the homeless are divided into thirteen sub-categories with individual operational definitions that are shaped according to living and housing conditions, so that the recording, monitoring and evaluation of the problem of homelessness is more accurate.

For its part, Eurostat, "Urban Audit - Methodological Handbook (2004 Edition)" defines the homeless as people without a place to live, who usually live on the streets without shelter (primary homelessness) or people who move frequently between temporary accommodation (secondary lack of housing). Consequently, homeless people may be those who are forced to sleep: (a) outdoors, (b) in buildings that do not meet commonly accepted criteria for human habitation (e.g. privacy, hygiene, adequate space), (c) in emergency or longer-term overnight shelters provided by the public sector or by charities, (eg non-emergency centres, battered women's shelters, deportation centers for asylum seekers and illegal immigrants), (d) in other short-stay accommodation (duration less than 1 month), (e) in the homes of friends or relatives, (f) in squats. Excluded from this definition are people living in the following types of accommodation: hospital wards, nursing homes, prisons, student residences, boarding schools, orphanages, barracks, mobile homes, supported housing (for low incomes)<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2. The right to residence and its international recognition

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union<sup>4</sup> recognizes and incorporates into European Law a number of individual, civil, political, economic and social rights for European citizens and residents, but does not include a specific right regarding housing. However, Article 34.3 provides for an important right to housing assistance. This specific paragraph comes from article 13 of the European Social Charter<sup>5</sup> (ECC) of the Council of Europe and articles 30-31 thereof. Article 30 provides for the obligation of States to promote effective access to a range of services including housing, while Article 31 provides for the obligation of States to promote access to adequate housing, the prevention and reduction of homelessness with the aim of gradually its elimination and the obligation to make rents affordable for those who do not have sufficient resources. This was followed by the incorporation of the Charter into the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>6</sup> which gave legal force to the right to social assistance and housing assistance across Europe.

Thus, the EU, in order to combat social exclusion and poverty, recognizes and respects the right to social assistance and housing assistance to ensure a decent living for all those who do not have sufficient resources, in accordance with the provisions of Community and international law and national legislation and practices. At the same time, the European Court of Justice recognizes that international human rights conventions are another

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.feantsa.org/download/en\\_\\_\\_6311838887283173706.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/en___6311838887283173706.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/homeless-person\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/homeless-person_en)

<sup>4</sup><https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN>

<sup>5</sup><https://rm.coe.int/168006b642>

<sup>6</sup><https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT&from=EL>



source of fundamental rights in EU law and ensures that their interpretation and application are consistently followed by member states.

In the context of safeguarding human rights and in particular the rights of children who are the most vulnerable group of the population, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe compiled a handbook on European legislation on children's rights in 2015<sup>7</sup>. Thus, in field 8.4. "Right to housing" refers to the right of access to adequate housing conditions enshrined in Article 31 of the Council of Europe's (CoE) ECHR. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECHR) of the CoE has judged that "Adequate housing conditions on the basis of Article 31 paragraph 1, means any accommodation that is safe in terms of hygiene and health, which means that it must have all the basic facilities, such as water, heating, drainage, sanitary facilities and electricity, and also that it must be structurally safe, not overcrowded, and under safe and legal ownership." Evictions are permitted when they are justified, carried out under conditions that do not offend dignity and provided that alternative accommodation is provided. Living conditions in accommodation "must be such as to permit decent living" "[and] must meet the needs in terms of safety, health and hygiene, including basic amenities, namely clean water, adequate lighting and heating." The basic needs of the temporary roof also include the safety of the immediate surroundings". Also, children residing illegally in a country must be provided with appropriate accommodation with decent living conditions, while it is pointed out that inadequate housing conditions do not justify the placement of children in public institutions.

At the same time, the Racial Equality Directive includes accommodation in goods and services available to the public, the access and provision of which must be non-discriminatory. The prohibition of discrimination in housing benefits applies to long-term residents.

In addition, the Family Reunification Directive provides that in the context of family reunification applications, evidence must be provided that the dependent (i.e. a third-country national who holds a residence permit valid for one year or more and has a reasonable prospect of obtaining the right of permanent residence ) has accommodation that can be considered normal for a similar family in this area. The accommodation must meet the general safety and hygiene standards applicable in the Member State concerned. With regard to the housing of foreign children who are in irregular living conditions, both the failure to provide housing and the provision of inappropriate housing conditions in hotels constitute a violation of par. 1 of article 17 of the ECHR.

### **1.3. The dimension of the phenomenon of homelessness at the European level and the strategies to deal with it**

The first two decades of the 21st century left a legacy in Europe of a dramatic increase in homelessness and a different profile of people excluded from housing markets. In 2019, FEANTSA and the Abbé Pierre Foundation estimated in the EU at seven hundred thousand

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<sup>7</sup> The update of the manual is also available on the Council of Europe website at: [www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/thematic-work/children-rights](http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/thematic-work/children-rights)

(700,000) the minimum number of homeless people who sleep every night on the street or in temporary and emergency accommodation, i.e. an increase of 70% over ten years. In the years 2020 and 2021, the health crisis and disruption caused by the pandemic catalyzed social protection, accommodation and reception systems that had already been weakened in previous years. The health crisis, successive lockdowns that have significantly affected various sectors (hospitality, culture, tourism, etc.), have plunged millions of people into poverty, particularly affecting the unemployed, people in precarious or seasonal work, young people and students, the elderly, those who are not entitled more benefits as well as asylum seekers<sup>8</sup>. Additionally, the displacement due to war conflicts of a large number of refugees [estimated to exceed five million (5,000,000)<sup>9</sup> from Ukraine within Europe, mainly women, children and the elderly, will represent a great challenge for the possibility of housing and not only their care by the EU member states.

According to FEANTSA<sup>10</sup>, the lack of regular data updates and comparable methodologies on homelessness in Europe makes it difficult to get a true picture. The latest national and local data confirm a worsening of the overall situation in some countries and a stabilization – usually a very high leveling off – of overall homelessness in others. Most countries have seen an increase in the number of temporary and temporary accommodation as long term solutions. The understanding that homelessness is not a static phenomenon and that instead the lived experience of each individual may arise at different stages as a result of different trajectories in their lives is still rudimentary at European level.

In 2018, a partial and ad-hoc study was carried out by Eurostat<sup>11</sup> to give an overview of the scale of homelessness by looking at how 'housing difficulties' are experienced by the entire European population. Only 15 countries participated in this optional study for Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, as well as the United Kingdom, Albania and Switzerland.

According to this study, 4 out of 100 people in Europe report being homeless at least once in their life, 3 out of 100 people had to live with relatives temporarily and 1 out of 100 reports sleeping rough or living in emergency or temporary housing or in a place other than a home. For the majority of respondents (76.2%), the duration of their most recent housing-related difficulties was less than 12 months. Almost a quarter of respondents reported that this period lasted more than 12 months: for 11.5% it lasted between 12 and 24 months and for 12.2% it lasted more than 24 months. This long experience of housing difficulties is particularly significant and prevalent in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Spain. A third

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<sup>8</sup>[https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/News/6th\\_Overview\\_of\\_Housing\\_Exclusion\\_in\\_Europe\\_2021\\_EN.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/News/6th_Overview_of_Housing_Exclusion_in_Europe_2021_EN.pdf)

<sup>9</sup><https://www.icmpd.org/blog/2022/integration-of-ukrainian-refugees-the-road-ahead>

<sup>10</sup>[https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/News/6th\\_Overview\\_of\\_Housing\\_Exclusion\\_in\\_Europe\\_2021\\_EN.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/News/6th_Overview_of_Housing_Exclusion_in_Europe_2021_EN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1012329/8706724/2018+EU-SILC+module\\_assessment.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1012329/8706724/2018+EU-SILC+module_assessment.pdf)

of respondents reported that family and/or relationship problems were the main cause of housing difficulties, particularly in Hungary and the UK, where 45% of respondents were strongly affected by them. 26.8% cite unemployment, insufficient resources or financial problems, and 17% cite the end of a rental contract or unsuitable housing. Finally, while more than a third of respondents do not explain how they overcame housing difficulties, 22% report renewing family or social relationships, 18% report re-employment and 14% report moving to social housing or subsidized private housing.

#### 1.4. European Social Policies and Strategies to address homelessness in the 21st century

For nearly two decades, several EU-level initiatives have contributed to putting homelessness as an important issue on the EU agenda. In 2010, the adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy provided a unique opportunity for the EU to, for the first time, set as a priority social inclusion target – to lift at least 20 million people from the risk of poverty and social exclusion – and Member States committed to adopting national social inclusion targets as part of this strategy. Since then, there has been a growing awareness of the need for more targeted approaches and integrated strategies to combat homelessness and housing exclusion. In 2010, the joint report on social protection and social inclusion called on member states to develop integrated strategies for homelessness, providing guidelines (Council of Ministers 2010).

European Parliament resolutions adopted in September 2011 and January 2014 urged the European Commission to develop an EU homelessness strategy that could support Member States to take action to combat homelessness. As part of the EU's Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted in 2013, the Commission called on Member States to develop comprehensive national strategies on homelessness and at the same time committed to monitoring progress under the European Semester.

In 2017 the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission at the Gothenburg summit proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR). The Pillar sets out 20 key principles and rights crucial for fair and orderly labor markets and welfare systems in 21st century Europe. Some principles confirm rights already contained in the EU acquis, while others set clear goals for the way forward as we face the challenges arising from social, technological and economic developments. Actions at EU level can complement national actions, and the corresponding action plan is the Commission's contribution to the implementation of the principles of social pillar according to the appeals of the European leaders<sup>12</sup> and the European Parliament.

The EPSR is structured around three chapters: 1) Equality of opportunities and access to the labor market, 2) Fair working conditions, 3) Social protection and integration, while recognizing the right of the homeless to housing. Specifically, Principle 19 on "Housing and assistance for the homeless" states that:

- access to good quality social housing or housing assistance will be provided to those in need;

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<sup>12</sup>European Council, 20 June 2019, New strategic agenda for the EU 2019-2024

- vulnerable persons have the right to appropriate assistance and protection from forced eviction and
- the homeless will be provided with adequate housing and services to promote their social inclusion.

The action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights describes concrete actions to further implement its principles as a joint effort of Member States and the EU with the active participation of social partners and civil society. It also proposes headline targets for employment, skills and social protection in the EU to be achieved by the year 2030.

The three primary goals that should be achieved by the year 2030 and are consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, state that:

1. At least 78% of people aged 20 to 64 should be working.
2. At least 60% of all adults should attend training programs every year.
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million.

In order to achieve by the year 2030 the target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million, and taking into account that a) the relative income situation of the most vulnerable has not improved and b) the pandemic has worsened existing inequalities causing potential gaps in the adequacy and coverage of social protection, an integrated approach is necessary to address needs at all stages of life and combat the root causes of poverty and social exclusion.

In the year 2019 the Joint Employment Report (JER) highlighted important challenges that many Member States are facing, such as access to good quality housing, disposable household income for housing costs, rising rents and the recent increase in homelessness. The Report highlights the use of innovative dynamics in policy-making, involving a wide range of public and private actors, and the increasing convergence towards adopting strategic approaches to social problems.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, a useful institution for the protection of the right to housing is the European Homelessness Observatory<sup>14</sup> (Housing Rights Watch), a European network of interdisciplinary groups made up of organizations, lawyers and academics from various European countries, who are dedicated to promoting and protecting the right to housing for all. The Observatory looks for cases at local and national level, with the aim of individuals seeking in national courts a preliminary ruling from the European Court of Justice on the interpretation of the obligations of states bound by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, few homeless cases have reached the European Court of Justice, even though the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that homelessness issues fall within the state's obligation to prevent inhuman and degrading treatment.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21629&langId=en>.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.feantsa.org/download/justice\\_leaflet\\_gr\\_final7189015489155540631.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/justice_leaflet_gr_final7189015489155540631.pdf)

As mentioned above, signs of a reduction or stabilization of homelessness have nevertheless been observed in some countries and local areas. These positive developments, when seen in the long term, are systematically linked to the adoption of ambitious and sustained strategies that implement access to decent and affordable housing, removing short-term emergency and weather-based policies. For example, in Denmark the general trend stabilizes or decreases in large cities. In Copenhagen, where 25% of Denmark's homeless live, 1,442 people were counted as homeless during a week in 2019 (a 3% decrease compared to 2017 figures). In Odense, the Housing First policy was very successful and the number of homeless people decreased by 40% within ten years. However, an increase in homelessness has been observed in rural areas and medium-sized cities (eg Horsens and Slagelse). In Finland, the steady decline in homelessness that began in 2008 is ongoing. As of November 15, 2020, there were 4,341 single homeless people, a 6% decrease from the previous year, as well as 201 homeless families, a 24% decrease from 2019.

#### *1.4.1. EU policies to tackle homelessness (programming period 2021-2027)*

In the context of tackling the large increase in homelessness, especially in the last decade, the European Parliament called on the European Commission and the Member States to use the means available under the long-term EU budget (2021-2027) and the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism for improving employment and social inclusion opportunities for unemployed households.

On 24/11/2020 with the resolution of its Plenary, the European Parliament approved a text that included recommendations to the member states for the support and reintegration of the homeless such as:

- taking responsibility for tackling homelessness through prevention and early intervention;
- exchange of best practices between Member States;
- decriminalization of homelessness,
- providing equal access to public services such as health care, education and social services;
- supporting integration into the labor market through specialized measures, training and targeted programmes;
- improving measures to collect relevant and comparable data to help assess the extent of homelessness;
- providing financial assistance to NGOs and supporting local authorities to ensure safe spaces for the homeless and prevent evictions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- implementation of long-term national strategies to eliminate homelessness, based on housing and social policies,
- providing continuous and uninterrupted access to emergency shelters, as temporary solutions;
- promoting social entrepreneurship and innovation activities at the individual level to improve active inclusion.

With regard to the immediate implementation of social policies, the European Commission proposed in the first quarter of 2021 a strategy to ensure that children at risk of poverty and social exclusion have effective access to basic services, such as health care and education. He also proposed for the year 2022 the Recommendation of the Council on the minimum income, with the aim of effectively supporting and complementing the policies of the member states.

In March 2021 the European Commission in the Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights announced the creation of a European Platform to Combat Homelessness<sup>15</sup>, to support Member States, cities and service providers in sharing best practice and in identifying effective and innovative approaches. The Platform was launched in June 2021 through the "Lisbon Declaration", as a collective effort coordinated and facilitated by the European Commission, with the aim of initiating dialogue, facilitating mutual learning, improving the evidence base and strengthening cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in tackling homelessness in the EU. Platform members are representatives of Member States, EU institutions and bodies, social partners and civil society and their role is to:

- ensuring commitment and progress in the fight against homelessness;
- the further development and modification of the work program of the platform,
- providing the necessary leadership and vision needed to advance the fight against homelessness;
- proposing, guiding and contributing to work program activities in their areas of responsibility.

The European Commission is invited to support through the process of the "European Semester" and the "Social Protection Committee" the monitoring of homelessness in order to provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the progress made and to strengthen analytical work and data collection on promote evidence-based policies and initiatives to address homelessness;

At national level, homeless authorities and related EU funds are called upon to take action:  
- promoting the prevention of homelessness, the access of the homeless to permanent housing and the provision of favorable support services to the homeless, which could, inter alia, be done by:

- the development and adoption of strategies to eliminate homelessness, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Declaration by involving all interested parties in the design and implementation of these policy measures;
- encouraging cooperation between them at different levels and ensuring that EU funding opportunities are available for local actors fighting homelessness by providing local authorities and service providers with information on EU funding opportunities (EBRD+, ERDF, RRF),

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<sup>15</sup>Governance and Work Program Platform on Homelessness FINAL post SB 24012022 (002) (002)

- exchange of good practices to combat homelessness and how to implement them, in particular by:

- organizing webinars and peer learning events to identify and promote evidence-based good practice between cities and
- awareness/capacity building among cities on providing homeless housing solutions using InvestEU.

Under NextGenerationEU, a new key financial instrument is the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF), with a budget of €672.5 billion. National Recovery and Resilience Plans represent a unique opportunity to design and finance investments and reforms that support social recovery that focuses on jobs while embracing the green and digital transition. At the same time, the main EU instrument to support the implementation of the social pillar and the achievement of the three primary EU objectives proposed, remains the ESF+, with a budget of 88 billion euros. Additional funds for the implementation of the pillar will also come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which will finance infrastructure and equipment for employment, education and training services, as well as for social services<sup>16</sup>. The Commission will review the action plan in the year 2025 and the review will form the basis for further actions at EU level to achieve the EU's 2030 targets.

Finally, specifically to address homelessness, the EU budget for the year 2022 is expected to include a fund of nine hundred and ninety thousand five hundred (990,500) euros for the pilot project of the "European Homeless Count" (EUHC) program, aiming at the regular collection of data on the homeless locally. At the same time, other funding opportunities will be sought (EKT+, ERDF, Technical Support Facility, InvestEU Advisory services, etc.), while public authorities and stakeholders are expected to use their own resources to combat homelessness in Europe.

#### *1.4.2. End homelessness in Europe by the year 2030*

In the year 2020, the European Parliament highlighted the precarious living situation of more than seven hundred thousand (700,000) people experiencing homelessness in Europe and emphasized that housing is a fundamental human right, calling for stronger action by the Commission and Member States to eliminate of the phenomenon in the EU by the year 2030.

It is pointed out that the Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA at the 5th Review of Housing Foreclosure in Europe<sup>17</sup> showed that by mobilizing less than 3% of the subsidies foreseen in the budget of the Recovery Plan after the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union and the Member States would be able to immediately house all homeless people across Europe in decent conditions for a whole year.

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<sup>16</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en#documents](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en#documents)

<sup>17</sup><https://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/07/23/fifth-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2020>

According to Baptista & Marlier<sup>18</sup> homelessness is increasing in most Member States, while the difficulty of accessing affordable housing is a growing concern. Although policies to end homelessness can only succeed through a tailored local or regional approach, many stakeholders have called for European support with the aim of ending homelessness across the EU by the year 2030. Furthermore, energy poverty affects almost 34 million Europeans who are unable to keep their homes warm, demonstrating the lack of access to affordable quality housing for many families. The implementation of the Green Deal through the Renovation Wave initiative, the Commission's Recommendation on Energy Poverty, the future revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive, as well as the EU Energy Observatory's coordination and guidance for local action, will contribute in alleviating energy poverty and improving the quality of housing, especially for middle and low income households.

Effective access to basic services of adequate quality, such as water, sanitation, health care, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications, will be an important factor in achieving the 2030 target.

The development of integrated strategic approaches to homelessness is key to the successful implementation of Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. While progress is being made through the emergence of innovative policy-making dynamics and a growing convergence towards adopting strategic approaches, preventing and addressing homelessness remains a major challenge in Europe.

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) taking into account the in-depth national contributions given by the 35 participating countries, proceeded with a Synthesis Report. According to the Report two-thirds of ESPN countries report having some sort of "official" and/or "recognized" definition of homelessness at the national level. These official definitions, however, do not necessarily imply any legal and/or political obligation to provide accommodation or other support, but rather indicate recognition of the phenomenon. Particularly useful in addressing these challenges is the use of the ETHOS-Light typology, as a framework for reporting the categories of people defined as homeless in the 35 "ESPN countries". On the other hand, only 14 countries include "people living temporarily with family and friends due to homelessness" in the definition of homelessness and, of these, only four are actually able to provide data on the extent of this phenomenon .

Overall, people sleeping rough, staying in emergency/temporary accommodation services and those living in inadequate accommodation or in places that cannot be considered 'normal housing' are the most common references used in existing official definitions across the Europe. Overall, 24 of the 28 EU countries report dramatic increases in homelessness over the last decade as well as significant increases (increases of between 16% and 389%) in the number of homeless people. Finland is the only EU

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<sup>18</sup> Fighting homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe A study of national policies in <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21629&langId=en>



member state where homelessness has fallen significantly over the past two to three decades.

The determining factor behind the above-mentioned increases are pressures – whether long-standing or more recent – on the housing market, affordable housing and social housing supply. These multiple negative developments include sharp increases in property prices and rents, a large reduction in the number of low-cost housing, changes in tenancy laws, rent liberalization, limited or reduced public investment in public and/or social housing, low and inadequate levels of housing support, cuts to housing benefits, stricter eligibility criteria for access to social housing and increasing evictions.

Other adverse factors operating at a structural and systemic level, identified in many ESPN countries, include: poverty, rising unemployment and exclusion of the homeless from the labor market, precarious and low-wage short-term employment, legal provisions that increase the risk of eviction, insufficient welfare benefits, inadequate and/or difficult access to support systems and services and increasing immigration. Finally, risk factors for homelessness that operate at the individual level and are associated with individual vulnerabilities (eg, mental illness, substance abuse) and adverse family circumstances are identified.

Integrated strategic responses to homelessness and housing exclusion are growing across the EU, although evidence of their effectiveness remains scarce. National, regional and/or local strategies aimed at providing integrated strategic responses to homelessness converge in important commonalities in an increasing shift towards housing services and/or Housing First, the recognition of the critical role of homelessness prevention services and the implementation of multi-level and multi-sectoral governance structures to enhance cooperation.

In the majority of countries where specific targeted approaches have been implemented at the level of national strategies, the lack of robust evidence-based mechanisms for evaluating implementation progress is highlighted, which prevents regular evaluation of the effectiveness of such strategies. The results of such evaluations show some positive achievements. In particular, Housing First policies showed positive results in terms of maintaining housing, increasing available social housing, positive impact of rapid relocation actions for families with children and effectiveness of preventive support to avoid evictions. Evaluations of these programs and actions also highlighted challenges that need to be successfully addressed (e.g. the negative effects of legislative changes, the need to ensure access to existing support systems for households threatened by homelessness, the negative effects of the economic crisis on the capacity of local authorities to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups and the actual functioning of monitoring structures). Overall the figures reported show the significant and consistent progress that has been made in some EU Member States, but above all they demonstrate the need to significantly strengthen proven effective policies based on regular recording and data collection.

In Ministerial conference of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union on housing and construction, held on 7 and 8 March 2022 in Nice<sup>19</sup> it emerged that:

1. An increasing number of households in the EU are considered energy poor as they cannot afford to maintain adequate levels of comfort in their home due to the high energy demand of their home and rising energy prices. Building renovation can be one of the tools, among others, to fight energy poverty.
2. There are significant inequalities in the availability and access to adequate housing, especially for young people, families with children, including single parents, migrants and people with disabilities. People with disabilities and older people face physical barriers to accessing housing, including social housing.
3. These inequalities hinder economic growth by limiting occupational mobility and additionally risk increasing social inequalities between neighborhoods within cities. In areas with a stagnant or declining population, often combined with an increase in the number of elderly people, both the construction of such new housing and the renovation of existing housing stock are a problem, increasing disparities and tension between areas. It is necessary to increase the energy efficiency of buildings, promote the use of energy from renewable sources, reuse abandoned and/or unused and extend the durability of existing buildings, implement measures to reduce construction waste and increase the availability of green infrastructure. In the effort to reduce life-cycle emissions in the construction sector and achieve climate goals, incorporating circular economy principles (such as resilience, adaptability, design for disassembly, etc.) into the renovation and construction of buildings can have a significant impact.
4. More than 220 million buildings in the European Union, or around 85% of the building stock, were built before the year 2001. They are not designed to meet the current and future challenges linked to the climate crisis nor are they in line with the ambitious EU instrument and long-term climate goals. Their renovation represents a critical potential to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality for the year 2050.
5. Climate change and the lack of mitigation can have far-reaching consequences, especially for households living in areas that are particularly vulnerable. Building renovation could also contribute to improving resilience to natural disasters, in particular the stability and safety of buildings.
6. Building renovation can also strongly contribute to the twin transitions (digital and green transitions), for example it can bring about the adoption of digital solutions. It is essential to ensure that this digital transition does not exclude vulnerable citizens.
7. The construction sector faces a huge challenge in meeting European energy and climate targets while providing a sufficient number of additional affordable homes. It can also make a significant contribution to job creation and economic growth after the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, many countries face a shortage of skilled professionals and rising construction costs due to shortages and high prices of building materials, longer delivery times and rising energy prices.

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<sup>19</sup>[https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/media/fcxm11nj/final-declaration\\_finale-version-em\\_en\\_approved-20220308\\_vf.pdf](https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/media/fcxm11nj/final-declaration_finale-version-em_en_approved-20220308_vf.pdf)

8. A consistent integrated place-based approach should be implemented, as already mainly outlined in the Renovation Wave strategy: urban planning and design should be re-examined with a view to contributing to improving the energy efficiency of cities as a whole.
9. The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated inequalities in access to affordable and sustainable housing in some Member States, and pushed more people across the EU into housing cost overload. The pandemic has also highlighted the need to rethink spatial planning and housing design to incorporate the new expectations of citizens in terms of uses and quality of life. It has also demonstrated the vulnerability of the homeless to the public health crisis.
10. In order to avoid urban sprawl and with the aim of rationalizing land use and protecting biodiversity, especially in urban areas, public real estate or land can represent an extremely valuable spatial resource for urban renewal. In addition, extensions to existing buildings, where appropriate in terms of quality of life, can help to effectively reduce renovation costs and increase housing supply.

In conclusion, it is considered that homelessness is primarily caused by a complex and interrelated set of factors that lead to constraints and difficulties in the design of housing policies and the functioning of housing markets. The widespread lack of affordable housing, combined with a wide range of interrelated factors (poverty, unemployment, low levels of welfare benefits, lack of social protection and the changing nature of work leading to less secure and low-age employment) are also cited as important structural causes. Also, organizational factors (e.g. lack of information about existing services, unequal access and unequal quality of services provided, barriers limiting access to services, lack of human resources), legal barriers (e.g. lack of documents, legalization procedures ) and individual and family causes (eg, divorce and/or separation, family violence, drug and alcohol addiction problems, and health and mental health problems) are cited as additional factors in this complex set of interrelated obstacles that have a limiting effect on the design of social housing policies.

In conclusion, it is important to design strategies and action plans together with local and regional authorities that will be part of an integrated approach to urban development and include the management of cultural heritage, the promotion of high quality architecture and the design of public spaces. In line with the Nice Conference, emphasis should be placed on new projects developed within the framework of the New European Bauhaus initiative to promote sustainability, design, aesthetic innovation and inclusion supported by the European Commission and all European institutions. A participatory and inclusive approach should be promoted for civil society and all related organizations to be part of this initiative, regarding the use and well-being of their living spaces.

### **1.5. Good Practices**

Although the following examples come from European states, each national system is a product of the particular economic, social, cultural, climatic and political conditions that prevail in each country due to historical circumstances, conscious political choices and random events. Therefore, any good practices developed in a specific national environment are not necessarily appropriate for a different national environment or

cannot be transferred as such, but only after procedures that take into account the specificities of the new environment.

### ***Portugal***

In Portugal, the National Homeless Strategy 2009 – 2015 provided for a system of coordination and monitoring of interventions that included three distinct bodies:

- the Executive Unit of the Strategy (Executive Unit), in which representatives of the agencies directly connected to its implementation participate,
- the Enlarged Commission of the Strategy (Enlarged Commission), which includes representatives of various parties involved and has an advisory/deliberative nature,
- the Special Thematic Working Groups, in which researchers and experts participate.

As part of this strategy, a homeless registration system, the ENIPSA system, was established. In particular, the registration and monitoring of the homeless is done at the local level by the Centers for Programming & Intervention for the Homeless, which have the responsibility for monitoring the problem at the local level, investigating needs, coordinating services and drawing up specialized Plans Action. The system in the early stage of development did not cover the whole country and the data concerned the groups addressed to the Centers, while the processing of the information presented a delay. The National Homeless Strategy 2009 – 2015, at the planning level, includes distinct axes for the prevention, intervention and post-monitoring of the phenomenon.

Now, Portugal has developed the National Strategy 2017-2023 structured in two-year action plans. This strategy comes to revive and expand the first strategy, which was adopted intermittently in the year 2009 at the beginning of the financial crisis and for the period up to the year 2015. From a relevant overview (Baptista, 2018), the political and ideological environment as one of the main parameters for the consistent or non-consistent implementation of the strategy in the last decade. In addition, it is recorded as particularly important the consolidation of the perception of the necessity of cooperation between the central administration and the agencies from the field, the recognition of the role of local self-government and the establishment of corresponding policy planning and monitoring bodies at central and local level. Finally, a gradual shift from emergency to social housing policy is clearly supported.

### ***United Kingdom***

The United Kingdom has developed a specialized body for the horizontal coordination of public interventions for homelessness. This is the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness (Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness) which was set up on the initiative of the Minister of Communities & Local Self-Government with the aim of a comprehensive approach to the problem through the horizontal cooperation of all services directly or indirectly involved with the issue. The Working Group, in addition to the Minister of Communities & Local Government who is in charge as staff responsible for housing policy issues, also includes the Ministers of Justice (homeless release issues), Health (health services issues), Labor & Pensions (social care issues, promotion at Work and Welfare), the Minister for Education (school leave issues), the Minister for Defense (homeless veterans issues) and the Minister for Business, Innovation & Skills (vocational training issues). The Interministerial Working Group has developed the country's

national strategy on homelessness and is responsible for monitoring its implementation at national level.

Regarding the implementation of measures and actions, great emphasis is placed on the prevention and emergency management of homelessness, while significant weaknesses are presented in the part of the reintegration and follow-up of the homeless. However, in the field of prevention and immediate intervention, the practices implemented included special actions for the prevention of homelessness, costing 400 million pounds for the 3 years 2012 – 2015. Throughout the country, local intensive counseling programs for families with serious problems are implemented, such as .x. poverty, unemployment, mental illness, addiction problems, etc. (Troubled Families Programmes), with the aim of preventing problems in the tenancy relationship and evictions from their residence. An innovative pilot program of direct intervention for people living on the street (No Second Night Out Pilot Programme) was successfully implemented in London through the cooperation of the Municipality and voluntary organizations and it is expected that its application will be generalized throughout the country.

In addition, the United Kingdom is an illustrative example of good streetwork implementation, where street homeless outreach actions are often delegated to local authorities through the establishment of outreach and awareness teams. The role of these groups varies, but usually the workers seek, through communication with the beneficiaries, to identify possible health problems but also to collect basic information about their situation, to facilitate access to emergency accommodation or other accommodation (such as hostels or Housing First) and inform them about the day centers they can access for basic needs and services.

The NGO St Mungo's, Ending homelessness Rebuilding lives is one of the most active in homeless street work, supporting over five thousand four hundred and ninety (5,490) people a year, at every stage of support as well as their "transition" from the street. It has seventeen (17) contact groups and operates the national Street Link referral line (Street Link), in partnership with Homeless Link, which is the main service that citizens can use to report people they have identified they sleep on the street or in inappropriate conditions. This information helps streetwork teams to identify and approach the homeless population.

For emergency outreach services for homeless people living on the street in London, streetworkers go out every night and refer homeless people to one of three hubs in London that are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The hubs do not provide a permanent residence, but a safe environment away from the street, where a team of professionals undertakes the support and guidance of these individuals, so that through their own choices they can move away from the street. They often help homeless people to 'reunite' with their families or return to their hometowns in the UK and abroad.

## ***Belgium***

A typical example for the case of Belgium is the Municipality of Ghent<sup>20</sup>. In the Municipality of Ghent, it is implemented within the framework of the Housing First (HF) approach, an initially open program funded by state lottery funds and whose main objective is the immediate housing of homeless people who live long-term on the street and face substance use and/or mental health problems/ disability, and the provision of intensive support without additional terms and conditions (based on the principles of Housing first, installation, stabilization, integration). The idea arose from the inability to reintegrate a similar profile of beneficiaries through the traditional housing system (hostels), as well as vice versa, from the many problems they faced mainly with owners, beneficiaries of a similar profile who did not receive psychosocial support services and resided in rented housing.

Beneficiaries are referred by the Social Service of the Municipality to the Scientific Manager of the program, who in collaboration with the scientific team selects and distributes the beneficiaries to the HF social workers - reference persons of the program (in a ratio of 1/25-35 households).

The main inclusion criterion is the evaluation of the beneficiaries as in principle receptive to the provision of support from the program regardless of whether they are "capable of reintegration" or not. Beneficiaries must, in addition, be self-sufficient and legally resident in the country and in the Municipality of Ghent for 5 years. The beneficiary's obligations are those arising from the rental of the residence or inclusion in benefits or other programs, as they apply to all Belgian citizens.

For the housing of the beneficiaries, houses rented by social housing companies are used after negotiation - a special agreement with the Municipality. The contract is concluded for 9 years in the name of the beneficiary, who is responsible for its payment.

There is no special subsidy program for those who participate in the program. Beneficiaries can have access to the unemployment benefit, the minimum guaranteed income (985 euros per month for a one-person household), the housing benefit, according to the terms of each benefit. It is noted that the amount of allowances exceeds the available social rent prices.

The eviction procedure is initiated in accordance with the relevant legislation after non-payment of three consecutive rents and applies to all tenants. The percentage of evictions in the first two years of the lease for HF beneficiaries is 15%.

At the same time, in the Municipality of Ghent, the Social Rental Service (SRA) operates, which is the second and most recent model of social housing (since 1996) after the social housing companies and is aimed at the private rental market. The original idea was to quickly provide housing assistance to very vulnerable people who were experiencing homelessness and were on a long waiting list of social housing companies.

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<sup>20</sup>The data for the description of the actions implemented in the Municipality of Ghent were obtained during the work visit carried out in the said Municipality in March 2022, within the framework of the ROOF Cities Network; (URBACT) to combat homelessness, and in which officials of the Ministry participated.

The Service leases residences from private owners at a lower than market rent in exchange for providing a guarantee of payment of the rent for the entire duration of the lease and delivery of the residence to the owner in the same condition as it was received (warranty for damages), while the owner is exempted from the search and selection of a prospective tenant. The lease is for a period of 9 years, in accordance with the relevant legislation. From the experience to date, the lease of 50% of the houses is renewed, but with a higher price at the time of renewal.

To set up a Service it is required to lease at least 50 homes and within five years it should have a stock of 150 homes. For this reason, initially the Service appealed to homes from social housing companies, but now it addresses exclusively the private market.

A basic principle when approaching property owners (houses) is to give them the actual rental incentives offered, as well as the general profile of the beneficiary-tenants. The average negotiated price is 20% lower than that of current rental rates. Consequently, the final amount that the beneficiary who is first on the list is required to pay when offered a suitable house rented by the Service depends on the price that the Service achieved in the negotiation with the owner. As a rule, new contracts are more expensive.

No additional incentives such as the Service's home renovation grant are provided, as the philosophy is to treat the owner as a provider rather than a customer.

The Service approves the suitability of the residence based on specific standards, which, however, are not set very high due to a high percentage of aging housing stock, which is at the same time affordable. It is then sublet to very vulnerable households experiencing homelessness, according to the ETHOS typology. The period of subletting to the beneficiary is the same as that of the lease (9 years). The cases of termination of the contract with the beneficiary before the agreed period amount to approximately 8% per year due to finding other housing solutions and rarely due to eviction (2-3 incidents or 1% per year). In this case, a new household is added to the program for the remaining lease period.

As with social housing companies, in the above case there is no special subsidy program for those who participate in the program. Beneficiaries can access unemployment benefit, minimum guaranteed income and housing benefit, according to the terms of each benefit. To limit the risk of loss of income, the housing benefit received by the beneficiary is deposited directly into the Social Tenancy Service.

Beneficiaries are referred by the Social Service of the Municipality. Beneficiaries are selected by the Social Leasing Service with a scoring system, according to which a priority list is created for inclusion in the program which is also matched with the type of housing available, especially in terms of the number of household members and the size of residence. In the event that the beneficiary refuses an offered residence, he may have a second chance. Continued refusal may result in delisting for a period of time.

## **CHAPTER 2. THE DIMENSION OF THE PHENOMENON OF HOMELESSNESS IN GREECE**

### **2.1. Social Policies to deal with homelessness in Greece in the 20th century.**

The need and desire to own or use accommodation (a roof) is an integral feature of Greek society, which had prioritized the dream of ownership from a very early age, pushing the state's strategic choices in this direction. The beginnings of the debate on state intervention in the housing sector can be traced back to the year 1911, while the first official document that testifies to state intervention in housing is the Legislative Decree of 1923 "On the erection of affordable housing", which was followed by bills of 1929 "On public housing " and "On the facilitation of Public Servants to acquire a residence through the organization of special cooperatives" (Kotzamanis & Maloutas, 1985).

The unprecedented housing crisis that arose immediately after the Asia Minor Disaster of the year 1922 and subsequently the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in the years 1923-24, when it was necessary in a short time to find a way and secure the required funds for the housing of approximately 1.5 million Greek refugees from Turkey, pushed Greece to acquire administrative infrastructure and experience, for the first time, in the provision of social housing (Emmanuel, 2006).

The first state social housing settlements have the character of the temporary, which is reflected both in the design and in the construction and in the materials used. From the year 1924, the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Refugees (EAP) takes over the supervision. With the dissolution of the EAP (1930), rural rehabilitation passed to the Ministry of Agriculture and urban rehabilitation to the Ministry of Health (formerly the Ministry of Nursing). The Ministry of Agriculture participates in the rural rehabilitation of refugees by providing ready-made housing or housing loans to 350,000 refugee families (Lygizos, 1974).

During the post-war period, the issue of housing policy, which was a major challenge for all of Europe, was a key component of social policy in Greece. The Second World War and the Civil War had intensified the need for state intervention in housing, with the result that the State took relevant initiatives, mainly by establishing or mobilizing a number of agencies.

The Ministry of Welfare following the basic framework of the housing policy of the previous decades based on land expropriations, purchases of land from other agencies and private real estates, with the aim of their subsequent distribution, either in the form of plots or in the form of houses for a low price or loan, continues to implement housing rehabilitation actions to provide housing to other vulnerable social groups of the population (refugees, Greek expatriates, economically weak). Responsibilities also extend to populations affected by natural disasters, often in collaboration with other housing agencies (Stavridis, 2009).



At the same time, in the year 1954, the Worker's Housing Organization (ÖK) was established as a legal entity under public law (npdd), supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The main purpose of OEK is to support the country's workforce through affordable home ownership programs<sup>21</sup>.

The Deposit and Loan Fund and the Postal Savings Bank, as well as the Agricultural Bank and the Real Estate Bank, were the main agencies of government assistance for the granting of housing loans to various groups of workers. The most recent public body was the Public Enterprise for Town Planning and Housing (DEPOS), which was established by Law 446/1976 (A' 264) with the main purpose of building and offering housing, independent buildings or apartments, at a low price in households with low and medium incomes, as well as the provision of infrastructure and networks and the general implementation of redevelopment interventions in residential areas.

Since the 1980s, the housing rehabilitation programs have gradually declined, a trend that will continue in the following decades, resulting in the weakening of the housing policy in Greece. The decision to stop the implementation of housing programs by the General Secretariat of Welfare is followed by the abolition of DEPOS in the year 2010 and the abolition of the Labor Housing Organization in the year 2012, the assets and liabilities of which pass to the then Labor Force Employment Organization (OAED). now Public Employment Service (DYPA).

## 2.2. The phenomenon of homelessness in Greece in the 21st century

The phenomenon of homelessness in Greece came back to the fore in the early 90s, where the growing housing problems of Greek citizens coincided with the large influx of immigrants and asylum seekers, who came mainly from Albania, the countries of former USSR and African countries.

In the large urban centers of Greece, and especially in Athens, the housing problem presents itself in different forms, such as:

- inability to meet financial obligations for home maintenance
- accommodation of a large number of people in the same residence
- increase in evictions
- loss of residence and auctions
- increase in the number of people living on the street.

Factors such as lack of income due to long unemployment, lack of home ownership and lack of a family or wider supportive environment intensify the phenomenon of homelessness.

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<sup>21</sup>Specific beneficiaries of OEK's housing benefits are workers or employees, as long as they are insured in a main employee insurance organization, pay contributions to OEK, meet the basic insurance and other conditions for housing assistance from OEK and do not own their own residence. The resources of the OEK come from the contributions of the employees and their employers, directly linking the work with the benefits.

Since the 1990s, access to housing has been almost entirely linked to free market mechanisms, so land and real estate prices have risen spectacularly, following similar trends to other European countries (Emmanuel, 2008). The mortgage market boomed, providing consumers with unprecedented purchasing power that drove up property prices so that access to home ownership was no longer impossible based on income. Thus, access to privately owned housing in these decades takes place on terms that are no longer determined by the buyer but by the banking system. The new reality brought along the rental prices, which show a steady increase until the year 2007.

In 2010, with the onset of the financial crisis, the consequences on the socio-economic situation of most households are intense. Cuts in wages, pensions and social benefits and skyrocketing unemployment are reducing household incomes while the cost of their basic consumer needs continues to rise. Many households find themselves over-indebted with mortgages that they cannot repay. The only protection for borrowers is the subordination to Law 3869/2010 on the "Regulation of the debts of over-indebted natural persons and other provisions" (A' 130), which only protects the first residence, while it does not protect small entrepreneurs, who are exempt from subjection to the law. It is the period when the homeless gradually increase, mainly in the capital, with the appearance of the "new-homeless" who were citizens who lost their jobs and their previously satisfactory standard of living, resulting in either losing their privately owned homes or being unable to cover the costs of their rented accommodation.

### **2.3. The need for institutional recognition and "categorization" of the homeless**

The right to housing has been constitutionally guaranteed in Greece since 1975. However, it was only in 2012 that the homeless were institutionally recognized as a "special-vulnerable social group" in need of special protection measures. As inhibiting factors in dealing with the phenomenon of homelessness until then, the following are identified/considered:

- The lack of an organized action plan for the prevention and rehabilitation of the homeless, as the actions implemented were occasional and piecemeal in nature.
- The lack of official recording of the number of homeless people. Existing data comes from informal estimates by public and private agencies.

In the year 2010, the Panhellenic Federation of Homeowners (POMIDA) stated that, due to the economic crisis, more than 50% of tenants renting apartments in the center of Athens could not pay their rent. According to the data, approximately five thousand (5,000) evictions were recorded in the entire year 2011 and four thousand (4,000) people were evicted in just the first forty (40) days of the year 2012 (POMIDA Press Release 28.1.2012).

In a survey carried out in 2015 by the Municipality of Athens with funding from the EEA, it was found that in a sample of four hundred and fifty one (451) people sleeping on the street in the city of Athens, 62% were of Greek origin, 85% were men, aged between 35-55 years old, while 71% had been homeless in the last five (5) years due to the crisis.

According to ELSTAT, the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (including the homeless) reached 31.8% in 2018 (from 28.1% in 2008 and with the highest percentage of 36% in 2014) . Furthermore, according to the same report in terms of total household material deprivation:

- a) 17.09% declared an inability to keep their home warm enough,
- b) 21.5% were unable to pay utility bills (electricity, water, etc.) at least twice and
- c) 45.4% were unable to cover rent or mortgage payments.

Based on unemployment and poverty rates, as well as surveys on living conditions, ELSTAT estimated - in a publication published in the year 2015 - that approximately seventeen thousand (17,000) people were sleeping on the street in the Attica Region, while those who experienced various forms of homelessness, as described in the ETHOS typology, reached up to five hundred thousand (500,000) people in the country.<sup>22</sup>

#### **2.4. Institutional recognition of the homeless and planning of social policies to deal with homelessness in the period 2012-2015**

In the policies formulated to deal with the lack of housing during the economic crisis, a first horizontal set of actions is found in the provisions of the first memorandum and concerns the development of emergency intervention measures for the social effects of the consolidation measures (Papadopoulou-Kourachanis, 2017).

In February 2012, the Department of Social Perception and Solidarity of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, recognizing the growing problem of the homeless, addressed a call to relevant Ministries, involved public bodies, as well as Civil Society bodies with the aim of enshrining in law of the homeless as a vulnerable group, beneficiary of social protection and the preparation of an Action Plan to address the problem of homelessness, in combination with the search for a realistic funding base for the implementation of said Plan.

The Committee that was formed was divided into four working groups with respective objects:

- a) Definition of the concept of homelessness and assignment of rights
- b) National Action Plan
- c) Research/recording/surveillance system
- d) Mapping of existing situation - institutional framework/ planning/ responsibilities/ funding sources and exploring new possibilities

In the same year, the institutional recognition of the homeless followed, with article 29 (par. 1 and 2) of Law 4052/2012 (A' 41) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, as amended by sub-paragraph A.2. of Law 4254/2014 (A' 85).

Specifically:

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<sup>22</sup> ELSTAT, Press Release: Material deprivation and living conditions 2019 - Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Income reference period: 2018.

"The homeless are recognized as a vulnerable social group, which is provided with social protection. Homeless persons are defined as all persons legally residing in the country, who lack access or have precarious access to adequate owned, rented or leased housing that meets the necessary technical specifications and has basic water and electricity services. The homeless include in particular those who live on the street, in hostels, those who are accommodated temporarily in institutions or other closed structures, as well as those who live in inappropriate accommodation.

With this article the definition of homeless was the first tangible result of a wider initiative to draw up a National Action Plan for homelessness.

In January 2013, the Directorate of Social Protection and Social Cohesion of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security & Welfare took over, in accordance with article 18 of Law 4147/2013 (A' 98), the responsibility of drawing up the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. This process was included - alongside the reforms of labor relations and social security policies - in the wider context of developing a new model of "active policies" by introducing mechanisms that will, on the one hand, strengthen the adequacy of social benefits/services, and on the other, improve sustainability prospects them during the critical period 2015-2020. It is pointed out that one of the main target groups of the design was also people living in closed care structures and in inappropriate housing conditions or lack of housing.

The vision of the aforementioned planning included actions and actions for:

- the mitigation of inequalities with an emphasis on the effective protection of the most vulnerable groups of the population,
- the modernization of public inclusion policies with an emphasis on the proactive nature of the measures and the developmental dimension of social spending,
- upgrading the state, civil society and market cooperation framework with an emphasis on creating strong partnerships to combat poverty and exclusion.

At the same time, in the same year, based on Law 4052/2012 (A' 41), the "National Action Plan for Tackling the Problem of Homelessness" was drawn up by the Directorate of Social Perception and Solidarity of the General Secretariat of Welfare.

In said plan, FEANTSA's expanded definition of homeless was adopted and included four axes, under which the existing and planned actions were grouped:

- *Axis 1: Mapping and governance of the field of homelessness (recording, monitoring and management, production of valid statistics, housing application management system, administrative organization)*
- *Axis 2: Targeted prevention of homelessness*
- *Axis 3: Housing and reintegration (expansion, improvement and interconnection of direct access, emergency housing and temporary-transitional accommodation structures)*
- *Axis 4: Improvement of housing conditions for population groups living in unsuitable conditions.*

In addition, institutionalized targeted interventions were designed and started to be implemented in order to create a safety net for the most vulnerable groups of the population such as:

- the pilot application of the "Minimum Social Income" in thirteen (13) Municipalities of the country,
- the Fund for European Aid to the Needy (TEBA), for the distribution of food and items of basic material assistance to economically vulnerable households with accompanying measures for their social reintegration. This is a co-financed program with the aim of addressing the worst forms of poverty and material backwardness implemented through Social Partnerships of the Region, Regional Unit and Municipality and the participation of public or private bodies or Civil Society bodies,
- the "National Network of Direct Social Intervention", a national effort in which fifty-one (51) Municipalities, forty-six (46) NGOs, five (5) OTA legal entities, eight (8) Public Sector bodies and eighteen (18) participated private sector bodies, which launched the "Social Structures for Immediate Response to Poverty" in 2013<sup>23</sup>. In this context, there were targeted actions for the homeless population, specifically the Dormitories and the Day Centers. Other actions of material support for vulnerable social groups, including the homeless, were the operation of Social Grocers, Social Funds and Social Pharmacies in many Municipalities of the country,
- the "Housing and Reintegration" program, which was designed as a specialized intervention measure and implemented in 2015 by selected Municipalities in collaboration with NGOs. He introduced supported housing policies approaching the Housing First philosophy and prioritizing immediate housing reintegration. The homeless were placed directly into independent housing, while at the same time they were provided with support services to deal with their problems, as well as access to subsidized work. The program was financed by national resources of the Ministry of Labor with the National Institute of Labor and Human Resources as an intermediate implementing body.

Finally, great mobility during the crisis is observed by Civil Society with actions to support the homeless mainly in dealing with the most extreme and publicly visible phenomena of homelessness (e.g. homeless people living on the street), and for the provision of services which were intended to cover the most basic human needs. The financial resources of the actions came from community funds, from the voluntary contribution of citizens or charitable institutions or from the sponsorship of private companies. Even in cases where the planning or organization of such actions is left to the Municipalities, the implementation of the policies is usually entrusted to NGOs.

## 2.5. Social policies to prevent and deal with homelessness 2015 – 2019

In the period 2015-2019, the effort to support the groups of the population that have been affected by the economic crisis continues with the institutionalization and

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<https://socialpolicy.gr/2013/11/%CE%B5%CE%B8%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CE%B4%CE%AF%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%85%CE%BF-%CE%AC%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81.html>

implementation of a series of welfare programs and actions, some of which concern and aim specifically at dealing with homelessness and social exclusion.

### 2.5.1. Programs and actions to deal with the humanitarian crisis as a consequence of the economic crisis

1. With Law 4320/2015 (A' 29), measures are instituted to deal with the humanitarian crisis where, among other things, the following are implemented:

a) The Rent Allowance, which provided for the granting of a rent allowance to families and individuals who live in conditions of extreme poverty and cannot afford housing in a privately owned property in their place of permanent residence. The monthly allowance amounted to seventy (70) euros per person and up to two hundred and twenty (220) euros for large households. Until the end of 2016, when the application of the measure ended, the allowance was paid to approximately twenty-two thousand (22,000) families with an expenditure of 46 million euros.

b) The feeding subsidy, which provided for the granting of a prepaid card for the purchase of goods to families and individuals living in conditions of extreme poverty. The monthly subsidy amounted to seventy (70) euros per person and up to the amount of two hundred and twenty (220) euros for large households. Until the end of 2016, when the application of the measure ended, the allowance was paid to approximately one hundred and forty-eight thousand (148,000) households with an expenditure of 298 million euros.

c) The electricity subsidy, which provided for the subsidy of electricity consumption to families and individuals living in conditions of extreme poverty. The monthly subsidy amounted to up to 300 kw. Until the end of 2016, when the application of the measure ended, it was paid to approximately ninety-two thousand (92,000) households with an expenditure of 34 million euros.

2. **By law 4389/2016**(A' 94) it is possible to join the Social Solidarity Income for homeless people who live on the street or in inappropriate accommodation, if they have been registered by the social services of the Municipalities or use the services of Open Day Centers for the Homeless.

3. **By law 4445/2016**(A' 236) establishes the universal implementation of the "Social Solidarity Income" program with the aim of combating extreme poverty and ensuring a minimum income for all citizens. The program, in addition to income support, provides additional social services, benefits and goods, as well as employment activation and promotion services. With the joint ministerial decision under reference D26/13/ok.61620/848/22.12.2017 (4750 B'), the beneficiaries of the Social Solidarity Income are, upon their application, automatically included in the benefits of the European Aid Fund for the Needy.

4. With the joint ministerial decision (B' 908) under data A3(c)/ΓΠ/οικ.25132/04.04.2016, the free equal access of all uninsured citizens for medical treatment to the National Health System is foreseen. In addition, the possibility of free access to pharmaceutical care is foreseen for the financially weak and other vulnerable categories of uninsured citizens.

5. With Law 4472/2017 (A' 74) and the joint ministerial decision (B' 792) under data D13οικ.10747/256/6.3.2019 (B' 792) the Housing Allowance is established, a welfare program for households that rent their first residence. The program, which is implemented at the national level, is granted based on economic and property criteria and accommodation criteria, while the amount of the housing allowance amounts to seventy (70) euros per month for single-person households and up to two hundred and ten (210) euros for multi-person households depending on their composition. The beneficiary unit is defined as the household, i.e. all persons living under the same roof. Special care is given to single-parent families and households with unprotected children.

### 2.5.2. Programs and actions for the prevention and treatment of Homelessness

The "Housing and Reintegration" program continued after a relative extension until March 2017. In its final phase, the program provided housing to 564 households/1027 beneficiaries and subsidized the work of 348 beneficiaries.

**With the under no. 60134/786/2017 joint ministerial decision (B' 4545)** the "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program was established, as a continuation and improvement of the "Housing and Reintegration" pilot program. The program provided for a rent subsidy for young homeless beneficiaries for a period of up to 18 months, the coverage of basic expenses for household goods and utilities, inclusion in the Social Solidarity Income, as well as a work subsidy for a period of up to 12 months. At the same time, it provided psychosocial support to the beneficiaries with the aim of empowering and mobilizing them, so that they can smoothly reintegrate into the social fabric. The program, with a budget of five million (5,000,000) euros, was implemented by Municipalities with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants and Legal Entities under Public Law supervised by the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity, and provided housing to 141 households and a total of 608 beneficiaries.

**By Law 4611/2019 (A' 73)**, its beneficiaries "*Housing and Reintegration*", after completing the program they joined the "Housing Allowance" program, with the same amount of rent subsidy they received from the program for a period of twelve (12) months. The aim of this provision was to provide an increased support framework for the beneficiaries of the program, but also the gradual de-escalation of the services provided, in order to achieve their gradual transition to an independent living regime after the end of the above transitional period. Following the expiry of this, the above beneficiaries could, upon application, join the Housing Allowance, in accordance with its terms and conditions.

In the year 2018 - in continuation of what had been established for homelessness in Law 4052/2012 (A' 41)-a "Pilot Census of Homeless People" was carried out who lived either on the street or in homeless structures (hostels, dormitories) and supported apartments in 7 large Municipalities of the country: in the Municipalities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Heraklion, Ioannito, N. Ionia and Triokkaia. The pilot recording was implemented as part of a co-financed program in collaboration with Panteion University and IDIKA. To carry out the pilot recording, a relevant implementation methodology was developed, which included, among other things, an electronic platform, structured

questionnaires for conducting the recording on the road and in structures, recording guides and evaluation questionnaires.

In the framework of the project "Creation of Tools and Definition of Procedures for the Registration of the Homeless", which aims to create a mechanism for monitoring and recording the homeless population, the following were planned:

a) Electronic Platform for the interconnection of homeless structures and the recording of housing requests (<https://www.astegoi.gov.gr/referral/>). Through the online platform, agencies that provide services to the homeless will connect electronically, submit and manage housing requests through online monitoring of the availability of beds compatible with the profile of housing applicants.

b) Electronic platform for recording homeless people on the street and in structures (<https://astegoi.gov.gr/survey/>) through structured questionnaires and an observation form. The platform enables on-the-spot electronic research and recording of homeless people on the street and in structures using a mobile phone application, with the aim of extracting statistical data on the number and profile of homelessness in Greece. It was used in the pilot recording carried out in the year 2018.

c) Homelessness website ([www.astegoi.gov.gr](http://www.astegoi.gov.gr)) with the aim of providing information on the agencies and structures providing services to the homeless, programs for the reintegration of the homeless, the housing benefit, cold shelters during the winter, the current institutional framework, studies and statistics on issues of homelessness, as well as announcements from competent authorities institutional and civil society bodies.

### **2.5.3. Institutional interventions to deal with homelessness**

1. With the joint ministerial decision (B' 1336) "Determining a framework of minimum specifications for Homeless Service Provision Structures" and aiming at upgrading the operation of homeless shelters and establishing minimum common standards for the provision of quality services, the terms and conditions for the operation of Dormitories, Open Homeless Day Centers, Transitional Hospitality Hostels and Supported Apartments for the homeless were set. The aforementioned joint ministerial decision determines the organization and operation of the structures (services provided, service conditions, capacity, opening hours, staffing, required facilities), the general building specifications, the licensing and control procedures of the structures, while a Standard Regulation is also included. Based on this framework, the call for structures for the homeless - Open Day Centers and Dormitories - which are co-financed by NSRF funds through the Regional Operational Programs (RPPs) was also specialized.

2. From February 2016, unemployed people who live on the street or in hostels or are temporarily accommodated in institutions or other closed structures, as well as those who live in inappropriate accommodation, can be registered in the Register of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (former OAED) - immigrants, who are holders of a residence permit - refugees, beneficiaries of international protection or applicants for international protection or holders of subsidiary protection status - abused women and children, accommodated in shelters for the protection of victims of violence. Thus, for the first time, it is possible to register in the Register of Unemployed of the D.Y.P.A. to groups of the



population that until now could not register, due to the impossibility of proving a permanent place of residence, while the other conditions for registration were met.

3. In the year 2017, the Department of Social Housing Policies was introduced to the Anti-Poverty Directorate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs<sup>24</sup>. The Department is responsible for planning, monitoring and control of implementation for social protection programs in the housing sector and in particular for the prevention and treatment of homelessness.

It is pointed out that in the year 2016, the Special Secretariat for the Social Integration of the Roma was established in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity<sup>25</sup> with the aim of addressing the extreme poverty and social exclusion of the Roma through housing policies (designing relocation sites, improving living conditions in existing camps), as well as actions for education, health and employment. The Secretariat's first step was the detailed mapping of the camps and spatial concentrations throughout the country. From this registration it emerged that of the total Roma population, approximately 9,900 people live in camps with very difficult living conditions, which are typical of homelessness.

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<sup>24</sup>p.d. 134/2017 (A' 168)

<sup>25</sup>Law 4430/2016 (A' 205)

## CHAPTER 3. NATIONAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

### 3.1. Basic Purpose and Objectives

The objectives of the national action plan to tackle homelessness are highlighted and defined to a significant extent through the EU policies to tackle homelessness as announced for the programming period 2021-2027 and defined in Principle 19 on "Housing and assistance for homeless" of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR).

### 3.2. Beneficiaries

Depending on their demographic and/or social profile, homeless people can be lone (without family) people, children and adolescents living on the street, young people leaving prisons or juvenile protection institutions without a housing alternative, single-parent families, families who are economically disadvantaged, people with health problems (substance users, people with psychological/psychiatric problems), the elderly, homeless people from socially excluded ethno-cultural groups such as the Roma, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc. .

Therefore, the target groups of the National Action Plan are:

- ❖ 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 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.

### 3.3. Implemented Social Policies and Actions to address and combat homelessness 2019-2022

In Greece, as in most EU states, tackling the problem of homelessness is part of either horizontal public social welfare policies to combat poverty and social exclusion (welfare policies), or as a special welfare arm of public housing policies (housing policies).

Since the beginning of the decade of the year 2000, two main models of intervention development for coping have been recorded internationally of the problem of homelessness:

- The model of "gradual development of services", where the successful transition of the homeless person from the scale of protected forms of services gradually to the next, i.e. to less protective forms, ultimately leads to access to independent autonomous living in stable housing. A gradual rehabilitation process is followed from dormitories to boarding schools, hostels and sheltered apartments before stable and permanent housing. This model asserts that the needs of a person's stable housing

can only be met safely if they are simultaneously treated with special support and counseling for other types of additional problems (eg health, unemployment, delinquency, etc.).

- The model of "immediate housing" (housing first), which arose from the perceived only partial success of staggered management and has as its primary purpose the immediate access of every homeless person to permanent and stable housing. It argues that the fact of the coexistence of health problems and possibly mental disorders should not be an obstacle nor can it suspend the right to access to stable housing, nor should it be considered a factor that requires preparatory and transitional special services. It believes that housing is a basic human right and that nothing should force any person to lose their right to a safe, permanent and stable home. He also believes that health and mental health problems are better treated and at a lower cost when the person has already secured stable housing. The basic argument of housing first is that access to independent housing is the first and fundamental step in dealing with the accompanying problems. It is pointed out that the "direct housing" model is now the dominant approach adopted both internationally and in the EU for planning policies to prevent and address homelessness.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs through the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty and the Directorate for Combating Poverty, taking into account the extremely difficult consequences of the economic crisis of 2012, has carried out targeted interventions to limit the problem of homelessness during during the last three years.

In any case, the effectiveness of policies to prevent and immediately deal with homelessness depends on their specific targeting on the one hand to people with an objectively high risk of being excluded from housing (people who experience repeated and prolonged homelessness with additional problems of mental health and drug use or alcohol), on the one hand to people who are unable to secure decent housing conditions in free market conditions.

In this context, the interconnection and complementarity of the already implemented national financial support programs for households (who either live in conditions of extreme poverty or have low incomes and are burdened with the cost of renting their first home) was designed and implemented, with the aim of providing an expanded service grid. Beneficiaries of these programs, with specific institutional interventions, also included individuals or families living on the street or accommodated in public social care structures.

### ***3.3.1. The tiered approach***

#### ***Minimum Guaranteed Income (MIG)***

With par. 1 of article 5 of the joint ministerial decision under data D13/ok.53923/2021 (B' 3359) the homeless who live in Hostels of Transitional Hospitality and in Hostels for women victims of violence are entitled to receive the EEE for up to two aid periods . The aim of the regulation is to strengthen the ability of the guests of the above structures to

gradually progress to independent living. In addition, with par. e) of par. 8 of article 2 of the aforementioned joint ministerial decision, in the cases of the autonomy of homeless people from Transitional Hospitality Hostels, Dormitories and Hostels for women victims of violence due to integration into the labor market, for integration into the EEE and the calculation of the income support, the total net income from hired services, community service programs or any other work program for two support periods is deducted from the total declared income. In order to be included in the arrangement, it is necessary to submit an application to receive the Minimum Guaranteed Income within the structure and to be independent from it within a period of six (6) months from joining the labor market. The aim of this regulation is the further mobilization of the guests of the above structures and the practical strengthening of their ability to proceed more directly to independent living.

The homeless hosted in structures, as beneficiaries of the program, can receive not only the financial support provided for each case, but also all other support services as they derive from the three pillars of the program, namely:

- a) the income support, with a guaranteed amount amounting to two hundred (200) euros per month for single-person households and up to nine hundred (900) euros for multi-person households depending on the composition, and is granted based on financial and asset criteria,
- b) the interface with social integration services and
- c) the interface with activation services aimed at the integration or reintegration of the beneficiaries in the labor market and in education.

The program is financed by the state budget with an annual budget of 727 million euros.

### ***Housing Allowance***

At the same time, as a reinforcing intervention to prevent and/or deal with the housing insecurity of low- or middle-income households living in a rented house, the implementation of the "Housing Allowance" continued as a welfare program that helps to alleviate their burden with the cost of renting their first home. The allowance provides from seventy (70) to two hundred and ten (210) euros per month, depending on the composition of the beneficiary unit, it has a total annual budget of 402 million euros from state budget resources, while the average number of beneficiary households for the year 2021 rose to 262,000.

### ***Homeless service delivery structures***

In the field of dealing with homelessness, but in the context of a process of transition and social reintegration into permanent residence status, the operation of the Dormitories is included as a structure for temporary overnight accommodation of the homeless with the parallel provision of psychosocial support services for the social empowerment of the beneficiaries. Homeless Day Reception Centers function adjunctively as temporary day accommodation structures for the homeless offering primary health care, personal hygiene, psychosocial support and entertainment services to the homeless.

Today there are nine (9) Homeless Day Reception Centers, nine (9) Dormitories, ten (10) Homeless Hostels, as well as twenty-four (24) Abused Women Hostels.

This form of staggered development of services aims at the successful transition of the homeless person from the scale of protected forms of services gradually to the next, i.e. to less protective forms, so that with the appropriate support they can finally be led to stable housing, i.e. to achieve the goal of access to independent living independent living and social reintegration.

### ***Intervention on the street (streetwork)***

Streetwork, as a methodology for approaching people living on the street by specialized scientists (mainly social workers), is one of the most important actions to support the homeless. In addition to immediate relief services, such as first aid, nursing and medical advice, basic necessities, it additionally contributes to the information - networking of the homeless with services to meet their needs (e.g. hostels, dormitories, shelters, bathrooms, etc. ). At the same time, the action records the living conditions on the street and maps the areas where the homeless live (re)shaping at the same time the services provided based on the current needs of the homeless and the environment where they live.

In Greece, streetwork services are offered by public bodies, bodies that belong to the local government, but also civil society, through non-governmental organizations.

### ***3.3.2. The Housing First approach***

However, the recording and evaluation of the empirical data and statistics from the implementation of the programs of the previous period showed that the problem of lack of housing is prevented by the immediate transition to independent housing and the interconnection of the household with the services of the local community.

### ***Housing and Work for the Homeless***

In this field, the "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program was established by Law 4756/2020 (A' 235) as a permanent program for the immediate housing and social integration of individuals and families living in conditions of homelessness. This program is a continuation of corresponding programs that were implemented in the years 2014 and 2018 from resources of the primary surplus of the state budget, with an improvement of the terms and duration of inclusion in it, as well as interconnection with other programs and services. In its new phase, it aims to reintegrate 600 households/800 beneficiaries every two years at a cost of 10 million euros and is a first but fundamental step to address homelessness and accompanying problems.

In the context of this program, it was deemed necessary to connect with additional social services and financial support both during the provision of the services and after their completion, through the Minimum Guaranteed Income and Housing Allowance programs.

So with the no. 71670/2021 of joint ministerial decision (B' 4500)<sup>26</sup>, the beneficiaries of the "Housing and Work" program of article 15 of Law 4756/2020 (A' 235), who, after the

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<sup>26</sup>Replacement of the joint ministerial decision (B' 792) "Determining terms and conditions for the implementation of the Housing Allowance program" under data D13/ok.10747/256/6.3.2019.

expiration of their right, are disenrolled from the program, are entitled to receive the Housing Allowance upon electronic submission of the relevant application and in derogation of the program's income and asset criteria. The amount of Housing Allowance that the beneficiaries are entitled to is equal to 75% of the rent subsidy, according to the limits of the Housing and Work program for the homeless, for a period of twelve months from the month following the end of the program for each beneficiary, under the condition of the existence of a residential lease contract for the above period of time. After the expiry of the above-mentioned twelve-month period, the beneficiaries are entitled to receive the Housing Allowance again after submitting a relevant application online for an additional twelve-month period, provided that there is a residential lease contract for the said period of time and in derogation of income and property criteria of the program".

### *3.3.3. Consultation on the submission of policy proposals*

Simultaneously with the aforementioned actions and institutional interventions, the need to draw up a National Action Plan for the development of a set of measures and services to prevent and deal with the problems of access to suitable and decent housing, with the long-term goal of universal and permanent treatment of housing problems for the population facing or threatened with homelessness, is deemed more necessary than ever.

Taking into account this necessity, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, through the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty, proceeded with an initiative to update the necessary actions and actions to monitor the phenomenon of homelessness and submit policy proposals at all stages of intervention , with the initial establishment of a Working Group<sup>27</sup>. It was attended by representatives of public bodies, as well as bodies from civil society, who were then divided into four working sub-groups.

The task of the Working Group was to monitor the phenomenon of homelessness and submit policy proposals at all stages of intervention to deal with it: registration, crisis intervention, transitional accommodation, supported living, reintegration, post-monitoring. Annex A summarizes the findings and proposals of the Working Group.

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<sup>27</sup>The Working Group was established with the no. 830/17.3.2021 decision of the General Secretary of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which was published in the Official Gazette B'1221 (ADA PSD7Y46MTLK-OAG).

## CHAPTER 4. THE AXES OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2023-2027

The regular feedback through the statistical data and the evaluations of the implemented actions in combination with the findings, the concerns and the submitted proposals resulting from the aforementioned Working Group, lead to the redefinition of goals and actions to monitor the phenomenon of homelessness and the formation of a coherent plan of action in the direction of strengthening and expanding its prevention and combating policies.

A basic condition is the utilization of European funding through which these policies and actions can be supported (NSRF, Recovery Fund).

Therefore, the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty and the competent Directorate for Combating Poverty in the context of the medium-term expansion of horizontal measures to prevent and combat homelessness, will proceed with the implementation of new policies structured in the following 7 axes:

1. Prevention
2. Crisis intervention
3. Reintegration
4. Register
5. Education – Information
6. Institutional interventions
7. Evaluation

### 4.1. Axis 1 – Prevention

#### *4.1.1. Social Housing pilot program*

With the aim of the gradual development of a social housing program, the implementation of a pilot Affordable Housing Program has been approved in the Municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki with funding from the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF). It aims to prevent and address the foreclosure of vulnerable groups who are threatened or experiencing homelessness by making use of part of the unused private and public housing stock. The Working Group has been set up to elaborate and submit proposals for defining the terms of its implementation and in particular for:

- a) the definition of the framework of incentives and commitments for the owners,
- b) determining the eligibility and/or prioritization criteria for the inclusion of owners in a social housing network,
- c) the identification and prioritization of the most vulnerable sub-groups among those threatened or facing homelessness;
- d) the description of the terms and conditions of the affordable housing program,

The Recovery and Resilience Fund will finance the renovation costs and the technical support of the program. Rent coverage, household equipment and bill expenses are

covered by the beneficiaries either with their own resources or through their membership in another social support program.

#### *4.1.2. Extension of the Social Housing program*

The Social Housing program will be extended to other large Municipalities of the country, through inclusion in the current programming period of the NSRF (2021-2027), with an increase in the number of homes and implementation areas, but also a simultaneous increase in available resources. The actions cover staffing and operating costs of the social rental offices and repair costs (renovation and energy upgrade) and the total budget of these is estimated to reach 50 million euros. The program will be implemented at the Municipal level through the operation of social rental offices that will manage the housing stock in order to make it available at a low rent for the housing of vulnerable groups.

In the above context, the following actions will be implemented, among others:

- a) the unused housing stock of the ministry will be recorded, with the aim of utilizing it in social housing programs,
- b) the framework for the implementation of the program will be established (selection of beneficiaries, procedures of involved services, property management),
- c) the program will be interconnected with other implemented programs (Housing and Work for the homeless, housing allowance, other rent subsidy programs), while the possibility of interconnection with housing renovation programs (the Save program) will also be examined, which will also contribute to the energy upgrade of of residences.

As a challenge for the immediate and substantial reintegration of the beneficiaries, the possibility for the potential beneficiaries of the social housing program (homeless, unemployed, members of poor households in precarious housing) to work for the implementation of the program is considered, especially as regards the part of renovation of the houses, so that the program acquires a developmental dimension.

#### *4.1.3. Program Coverage*

Law 5006/2022 (A' 239) established the Coverage program, which seeks to utilize the existing stock of apartments of the ESTIA program for the implementation of a social housing program. The goal of the program is to provide at least 1,000 private homes as social housing to young people aged 25-39, beneficiaries of the Minimum Guaranteed Income, without owning a first home. The selection of the beneficiaries will be based on objective criteria with priority given to single-parent families, families with three children and those with many children. The scheme will cover the cost of renting the residence for a period of three years and any repair costs, where required. The total cost will amount to 21.5 million euros.

#### *4.1.4. Creation of a mechanism to prevent homelessness*

The action envisages the creation of a mechanism for early detection of vulnerable households living in rented housing in conditions of threatened homelessness. The



mechanism is structured around two main pillars, which include the following indicative proposed measures:

#### Pillar 1 - Timely identification and diagnosis of needs

- Use of the Housing Allowance and Minimum Guaranteed Income platform by the Social Services of the Municipalities in combination with structured questionnaires to diagnose the housing insecurity of vulnerable households living in rented housing, with basic parameters:
  - Present housing difficulties, in particular rent arrears, threatened eviction, utility/utility bill arrears, power outages and lack of adequate heating.
  - Current employment status
  - History of eviction or homelessness
  - Other data available from the platform (e.g. income, vulnerability)
- Obligation of owners to notify extrajudicial and eviction proceedings to the Social Services of the Municipalities
- Interconnection of courts and Municipal Social Services for the timely notification of the latter in cases of filing of eviction lawsuits and eviction decisions.

#### Pillar 2 – Support measures

The measures aim to prevent the loss of housing or to offer alternative housing solutions in cases where it cannot be prevented. They are usually implemented by the Social Services of the Municipalities and, in chronological order, include indicatively:

- Mediation between landlord and tenant
- Financial and legal consulting
- Joining available social support programs
- Emergency financial aid according to article 202 par.2 of the Municipal Code
- Interconnection for provision of free legal assistance of Law 3226/2004
- Interface for inclusion in available housing programs
- Interface with hosting structures

### 4.2. Axis 2 – Crisis intervention

#### *4.2.1 Improvement of existing and financing of new structures*

With the aim of increasing the structures providing services to the homeless and the provision of services to special categories of them, the operation of a hospitality structure for people of the LGBTI+ community has been announced and is expected. The structure will take the form of a unit of seven semi-autonomous temporary accommodation apartments with a capacity of up to three people each.

At the same time, the reopening of the Homeless Hostel in the EKKKA building on Epicourou Street is planned, after completion of all technical improvement interventions and obtaining the relevant operating license.

In addition, the organizations operating structures for the homeless will be asked to record the current situation with regard to building infrastructure, equipment and their operation, in order to implement improvement interventions, where necessary.

#### *4.2.2. Program to support streetwork actions and coordination of actions between agencies*

With the aim of strengthening the immediate provision of basic necessities, informing the homeless about the possibility of their inclusion in existing social programs and/or services, and the provision of basic psychosocial support services, a program will be instituted to strengthen streetwork actions in large urban centers. The program will be implemented by the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty through an invitation to fund streetwork actions to agencies with experience in providing services to the target group. The action is expected to act as a reinforcement in the increase of mobile intervention units and the services offered by them. The budget of the program will amount to two million euros per two years and will be borne by the state budget.

In the context of the program, the design and implementation of training seminars for workers in institutions that provide services to the homeless will be announced additionally. The seminars will aim to provide specialized knowledge to people called to provide streetwork services and to create a pool of specialized social scientists in this field.

At the same time, the aim is to create a body for coordination and monitoring of the actions implemented at the level of Municipalities with the aim of coordinating them, avoiding overlaps both at the level of geographical coverage and at the level of items/services provided, as well as the collection and distribution of statistical data and quality characteristics for the target group directly from the field. The data that will be collected by the body in question will be taken into account both during the drafting of the Call for proposals for funding streetwork actions and during the evaluation of the submitted proposals.

The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty during the reporting period of the NAP, will implement, in collaboration with the institutions and organizations that carry out street work actions, training days for institutions and workers in the field, information and awareness in matters of prevention, dealing with both the same of the phenomenon of homelessness, as well as the prejudices associated with it.

### 4.3. Axis 3 – Reintegration

#### *4.3.1. Housing and Work Program for the homeless*

The successful implementation of the program in previous years, as recognized by the implementing bodies themselves, is a guide for its continued implementation every two years from state budget resources. Care will be taken to design specialized plans for homeless people with multiple vulnerabilities based on a housing first approach.

#### ***4.3.2. Inclusion of homeless people in the special social groups of the Public Employment Service***

DYPA provides specialized services for the unemployed who belong to Vulnerable Social Groups. In particular, they are provided with information services and specialized information on training, employment and entrepreneurship issues, as well as personalized support services in order to join the labor market and achieve social and economic autonomy. The integration of the homeless as a special social group will work as reinforcements in the efforts of organizations to promote homeless people in the labor market with the aim of their reintegration. At the same time, special training and labor market integration programs will be created exclusively for the specific target group.

#### ***4.3.3. Sports and cultural activities***

These are actions to encourage participation in Sports and Culture, as a means of social reintegration of individuals and families living in homelessness, (within the implementation of the "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program).

The aim of the actions is to empower and mobilize these individuals, but also to treat them differently from the whole community in which they are active. It prevents the marginalization of people based on their cultural identity, socio-economic status, age and other factors.

### **4.4. Axis 4 - Recording**

#### ***4.4.1. Action to record the homeless on a regular basis***

The biennial registration of homeless people in large municipalities of the country is established. The methodology and tools that were developed following the recording carried out in 2018 will be used (electronic recording platform on the road and in structures through structured questionnaires and observation form, recording guide, scientific team, etc.) with the appropriate adaptation of these to identify and to include in the registration the less visible forms of homelessness (unsafe housing, inappropriate accommodation, etc.). The possibility is being considered that the recording precedes the start of the respective two-year "Housing and Work for the Homeless" program, so that the data that will be obtained in combination with the data that will emerge in the first year from the electronic platform of interconnection of the structures will constitute an important reservoir of the new beneficiaries of the program.

#### ***4.4.2. Electronic Register of Homeless Agencies and Structures and Register of Housing Requests***

With the joint ministerial decision (B' 5252) under data D13/oik.92262/5.10.2022, the single framework of procedures for the submission and management of accommodation requests in homeless structures, as well as the functional interconnection of the structures, was determined.

The completion of technical and quality interventions on the electronic platform and its launch in the second half of 2022 will allow agencies providing services to the homeless

to connect electronically, submit and manage housing requests through online monitoring of the availability of beds compatible with the profiles of housing applicants. In particular, the platform will enable:

- Recording the number of housing requests and serving them faster through online referrals,
- Extract data on the profile of people who apply for housing and are served by homeless structures,
- Extraction of data on the type and quality of services provided by homeless structures (such as indicatively, on the occupancy of each structure, the average length of stay of people in each structure, average waiting time for service, etc.), with the aim of better monitoring and evaluation of the services provided services and their redesign.

The action envisages the gradual expansion of the Electronic Register of Homeless Bodies and Structures with the inclusion of the Social Services of penitentiaries, hospitals and juvenile structures, as well as Counseling Stations and Women's Hostels. The goal is to create an integrated system for referring housing requests to hospitality structures.

#### 4.5. Axis 5 – Education – Information

##### *4.5.1. Training of professionals on issues of dealing with homelessness*

With the initiatives of the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty and the cooperation of the National School of Public Administration and Self-Government, a specialized training program has been designed for the executives of the Social Services of the Municipalities and Community Centers, as first reception services, in issues concerning the homeless. The purpose of the program is for the participants, public sector executives who are active especially in the field of addressing poverty and homelessness, to be informed about the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon of homelessness, as well as about the current directions and policies for the dealing with it at the European and national level, with the aim, on the one hand, to expand their knowledge on the issue, on the other hand, to contribute to the development of programs to deal with it at the local level and the further development of synergies with co-competent Agencies.

The implementation of the seminars has started since November 2022, while at the same time, the formation of a training framework and the participation of peer supporters in the design and implementation of programs with the aim of optimizing the formulation of policies through the utilization of the experience of homeless or former homeless people is planned. as well as the reintegration process of the target group.

##### *4.5.2. Guide to the implementation of emergency response measures*

Capitalizing on the experience from the management of the issues that arose during the period of the health crisis and related to vulnerable population groups, as well as the proposals submitted to the Working Group for the support and social integration of the homeless, a specialized Guide for the Implementation of emergency response measures will be designed in times of crisis. The Guide will constitute an action manual for the

management of emergency situations by the agencies that provide services to the target group.

#### *4.5.3. Homelessness website*

The upgrading of the website and its regular renewal with data and information on the social integration of the homeless aims to gather all available information on issues of homelessness, such as indicatively the bodies and structures providing services to the homeless, the current institutional framework, the reintegration and support programs, gathering places for protection against extreme weather phenomena and natural disasters, studies and statistics on homelessness issues, as well as announcements from competent institutional bodies and civil society bodies.

#### *4.5.4. Information-awareness campaign to combat the stigma of homelessness*

With the aim of combating the prejudice that often accompanies people affected by homelessness and contributes to their social alienation and often to the adoption by themselves of the negative stereotypes attributed to them, actions to inform and raise awareness about the homeless will be financed. The relevant campaign will be implemented on the one hand by the creation of appropriate communication material (television, radio spot, information posters) and on the other hand by the organization of awareness and information events and actions at local and national level. At the same time, emphasis will be placed on the optimal utilization of the funds already available for the implementation of similar actions within the Housing and Work for the Homeless program.

### 4.6. Axis 6 – Institutional interventions

#### *4.6.1. Establishment of a National Committee for Planning and monitoring policies for the lack of housing*

A National Committee for planning and monitoring policies for the lack of housing is to be established and operate in the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty with the responsibility of recommending and coordinating policies to address the lack of housing. The Committee, which meets at political and operational level, includes:

- Min. of Labor – G.G. of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty
- Min. of Labor – G.G. Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality
- Min. Health
- Min. Interior
- Min. Immigration Policy
- Min. Justice
- EKKA
- De-addiction agencies of Law 4139/2013 (A' 74)
- OAED
- OPECA Administrative Authority
- KEDE

- Municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Piraeus
- Network for the right to shelter and housing
- Scientific Bodies

Special consideration will also be given to the participation of peer supporters (homeless or formerly homeless) on the Committee. The Commission meets at political and operational level.

#### *4.6.2. Creation of an institutional framework for the operation of Social Leasing Agencies*

It is planned to establish the operation of Social Leasing Agencies with responsibility for the implementation of programs to provide affordable housing. The institutional framework defines, among other things:

- The agencies that can provide social leasing services
- The operating framework and responsibilities of the Agencies
- Beneficiaries of social rental/affordable housing programs
- The incentive system for owners

#### *4.6.3. Search for sponsorships in the context of utilizing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs*

The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty plans to seek sponsorships within the framework of corporate social responsibility programs of companies and businesses, with the main aim of preparing technical studies and carrying out repair, restoration and/or conversion into green environmentally sustainable buildings, properties owned by Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. These apartments will then be able to be utilized in the context of social housing programs or programs for hosting vulnerable individuals and families in the context of transitional housing coverage.

### 4.7. Axis 7 – Evaluation

#### *4.7.1. Control of effectiveness indicators of implemented policies*

Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan requires the development of a system of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of individual policies with the aim of redefining and adapting them to changing data.

In addition, the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity will carry out the drafting of a cost-benefit analysis study of the programs providing services to the homeless and control of the effective utilization of available resources. The comparison of the costs of the graduated intervention policies with those of the Housing First policies, in relation to their effectiveness in terms of the successful reintegration and autonomy of the beneficiaries, will be a key feedback tool for the redesign of the medium-term and long-term objectives of the national strategy for prevention and addressing homelessness.



## **INSTEAD OF CHOICE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK**

Although the examples from European Union states can contribute to the design of an action plan and, by extension, a broader housing policy strategy, each national system is nevertheless a product of the particular economic, social, cultural, climatic and political conditions that prevail in each country due to historical circumstances, conscious political choices but also random events. Therefore, any good practices developed in a specific national environment are not necessarily appropriate for a different national environment or cannot be transferred as such, but only after procedures that take into account the specificities of the new environment.

As far as drawing ideas and experiences from other national systems of homelessness management are concerned, these should be fermented with all those components that include the particularities of the Greek case.

It is pointed out that for the successful implementation of the National Action Plan in question, it is necessary on the one hand to submit it to a public consultation in order to record the opinions and proposals of all directly and indirectly involved bodies and citizens in the context of inclusion, and on the other hand to provide regular feedback in order to update it plan and the redefinition of the purpose and objectives taking into account the respective factors that will affect both the internal (administrative services) and the external environment and their consequences. The analysis of the Greek environment can be methodologically achieved with the SWOT Analysis tool (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), through which all the factors that will affect the successful implementation of a National Action Plan in the Greek system can be recorded.

## **APPENDICES**



### **A. Summary of the findings and recommendations of the Working Group**

The concept of homelessness as a multi-level crisis situation highlights the need to delimit the phenomenon with initiatives at the institutional level and at the level of implementing policies and taking measures. Among them, the institutionalization of periodic registration policies, as well as the networking of Agencies active in the field of dealing with it.

#### **GROUP A: CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

The homeless or those living in precarious housing conditions, in a time of crisis, are the most vulnerable and are threatened not only by their chronic isolation and social exclusion, but also by risks to their health, nutrition and safety .

More specifically, for the protection of the homeless, the working group proposed:

#### **In cases of economic crises:**

- Creation of a homelessness prevention mechanism for households living in precarious conditions with an emphasis on households with minor children,
- Possibility of immediate access to housing with minimum conditions through "Housing first" policies or other schemes, especially for those who are on the street for a long time with a special emphasis on substance users.
- Promotion and publicity programs for the benefits and state support to be provided and to inform and raise awareness among home owners.

#### **In cases of health crises:**

- The adoption by public authorities of FEANTSA's seven measures<sup>28</sup>to protect the homeless and public health.
- The adoption of repeated hygiene measures, hospitalization protocols, measures to reduce the risk of disease transmission, reinforcement measures with emergency health personnel for the treatment of this population.
- The possibility of strengthening the infrastructure with emergency "shelters" to reduce overcrowding (additional emergency accommodation).
- The inclusion in a permanent information mechanism including the population of immigrants and refugees.
- The pilot implementation of action to carry out diagnostic tests and vaccinations, in a specially designed area.

#### **In cases of climate crisis and natural disasters**

- Creation of a permanent mechanism to cover immediate needs after natural disasters that includes, among others:
  - The immediate granting of benefits in money and in kind
  - Taking rent reduction measures for those affected who lost their first home,
  - Creation of subsidized jobs in the resettlement areas and training in new jobs.
- Providing incentives to avoid further mass travel to major urban centers.

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<sup>28</sup><https://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/03/18/covid19-staying-home-not-an-option-for-people-experiencing-homelessness?bcParent=26>

#### GROUP B: HOMELESS REGISTRATION

Regarding the registration of homeless people, the working group proposed the following:

##### Institutional vesting and policies

- institutionalization and periodicity of the homeless registration process, in cooperation with institutions, organizations and the municipalities of the whole country,
- utilization of the results of the registration for the adoption of specific goals and steps for the social integration of the homeless

##### Logging process and tools:

- collaboration with a scientific body for the registration process and the processing and evaluation of the findings,
- need for further improvements and utilization of the electronic registration platform, for the collection of data and its utilization in the design of new policies
- creation of four (4) recording questionnaires that capture the different housing conditions experienced by individuals (street or inadequate accommodation, structures, supported apartments, housing insecurity).

#### GROUP C: CONNECTION

The institutionalization of a system of electronic interconnection of homeless structures and management of housing requests is an integral part of an integrated registration and networking policy, as it responds to the constant request for reliable data and for synergies between the active Agencies. The online platform <https://www.astegoi.gov.gr/referral/> provides for the creation of a Register of homeless structures and a Register of housing requests - beneficiary structures. It specifically targets the following:

##### Management of housing requests:

- facilitating homeless people's access to the housing system through online provision of information on the availability of beds in housing structures
- facilitating cooperation between Agencies that provide services to the homeless population through the possibility of referring requests for housing

##### Updated statistics and policies:

- compilation of up-to-date statistics on the profile of people applying for housing, as well as beneficiaries of homeless structures
- compilation of up-to-date statistics on the services provided by homeless structures
- highlighting needs for new policies and institutional adjustments to the housing system

#### GROUP D: PROPOSED POLICIES AND FUNDING

The need to take initiatives both at the institutional level and at the level of implementation of actions is highlighted, with a dual objective: on the one hand, the prevention of homelessness for individuals and households who are at risk of losing their residence, and on the other hand, to address homelessness with housing and

reintegration of those who live on the street or do not have access to suitable and decent housing. In this context it was proposed:

*a) The expansion of existing policies by increasing the available budget of these:*

- Housing Benefit,
- Housing and Work Program for the homeless,
- Service facilities (hostels, dormitories, day centers)
- Crisis intervention and emergency response policies

*b) The institutionalization and implementation of new policies:*

- Development of a social housing program,
- Housing First policies that emphasize the immediate empowerment of the homeless
- Development of synergies with Social Economy programs and specialized programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. for homeless people,
- Provision of specialized mental health services,
- Training of professionals on issues of dealing with homelessness

*c) The increase of state budget resources for actions to prevent and combat homelessness, as well as the utilization of all available European funding sources for the development of new programs and the provision of services to the target group.*

## B. Table of Political Actions of the National Action Plan

B. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS								
Target group: Homeless people on the street, guests in transitional accommodation structures and households in a precarious housing situation								
AXIS	ACTION	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION (AIM AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES)	COMPETENT MINISTRY / IMPLEMENTING BODY	BENEFICIARY CATEGORY	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES PER YEAR	COST OF ACTION PER YEAR	FINANCIAL SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
PREVENTION	Action 4.1.1. Affordable Housing Program	Affordable Housing Pilot Program to be implemented in the Municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki with funding from the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF). It aims to prevent and address the foreclosure of vulnerable groups who are threatened or experiencing homelessness by making use of part of the private and public housing stock that is not currently in use. The program will also aim at renovating and energy upgrading part of the inactive	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs & Municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki	Vulnerable population groups (single-parent families, long-term unemployed, etc.) among those at risk of or experiencing homelessness	Number of households: 100 (estimated 200 beneficiaries).	The actions cover staffing and operating costs of the implementing body as well as repair costs. The total budget of these is estimated to reach €1.5 million.	For the implementation of the program, renovation costs and technical support will be financed through the RRF.	2023-2026

		housing stock and making them available under a long-term lease contract, with low rent for the housing of vulnerable groups.						
<b>PREVENTION</b>	Action 4.1.2. Extension of the Social Housing program	a) the Social Housing pilot program will be extended to other large Municipalities of the country with an increase in the number of homes and project implementation areas, as well as a simultaneous increase in available resources. The housing stock will be managed by Public bodies or Local Government bodies. b) the unused housing stock owned by the ministry will be recorded, with the aim of utilizing it in social housing programs, c) an institutional framework will be established for the implementation of the program (selection of beneficiaries, procedures of involved services, property management), d) the program with other implemented programs (Housing and Work for the homeless, housing allowance, other rent subsidy programs),	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Potential synergy with DYPA (formerly OAED) as an entity that may acquire real estate by purchasing it from private individuals, through auctions or through leasing,	Vulnerable population groups (single-parent families, long-term, unemployed, etc.) among those threatened or experiencing homelessness,	Up to 500 households (Total number of beneficiaries 1.5.000)	13 million €	NSRF 2021 - 2027	2024-2027

		while the possibility of interconnection with housing renovation programs (Escoyona program) which will also contribute to the energy upgrade of housing will be examined						
<b>PREVENTION</b>	Action 4.1.3. Program Coverage	Utilization of the existing stock of apartments of the ESTIA program for the implementation of a social housing program. The aim of the program is to make available at least 1,000 private homes as social housing to young people aged 25-39, beneficiaries of the Minimum Guaranteed Income, who do not own their first home. The program will cover the cost of renting the home for a period of three years and any repair costs, where required. The total cost will amount to 21.5 million euros.	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Beneficiaries of the Minimum Guaranteed Income with priority to single-parent families, three-child and large-child families.	Number of households: 1,000 (estimated 3,000-4,000 beneficiaries)	The scheme covers rent costs for three years and any costs of minor repairs to the properties. The total budget will amount to €21.5 million.	Public Employment Service Reserve	2023-2025
<b>PREVENTION</b>	Action 4.1.4. Creation of a mechanism to prevent homelessness	Creation of a mechanism for the early identification of vulnerable households living in rented housing in conditions of threatened homelessness. The	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Municipalities - Community Centers, Courts	Individuals or families at risk of homelessness		€3 million per year for the years 2025-2027	NSRF 2025-2027	2024 - 2027

		<p>mechanism is structured around two main axes,  Axis 1 - Timely identification and diagnosis of needs  Axis 2 – Support measures</p> <p>The measures aim to prevent the loss of housing or to offer alternative housing solutions in cases where it cannot be prevented. They are usually implemented by the Social Services of the Municipalities.</p>						
<b>CRISIS INTERVENTION</b>	Action 4.2.1. Improvement of existing and financing of new structures	<p>Structure function for people of the LGBTI+ community. Reopening of the Homeless Hostel in the EKKA building on Epicourou Street. Recording of the existing state of the building infrastructure of the homeless shelters with the aim of implementing improvement interventions where required.</p>	<p>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Cooperation of the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty &amp; EKKA, Agencies that operate hospitality structures</p>	<p>Vulnerable population groups (single-parent families, long-term, unemployed, disabled, etc.) who face a direct lack of housing,</p>		€3,300,000	NSRF 2021 - 2027	2024-2027
<b>CRISIS INTERVENTION</b>	Action 4.2.2. Program to support streetwork actions and coordination of actions between agencies	<p>Program to strengthen streetwork actions in large urban centers, through an invitation to fund streetwork actions to agencies with experience in providing services to the target group. The action is</p>	<p>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty -</p>	<p>Homeless people or families living on the street</p>		2 million euros per year	Regular budget	Commencement in 2023 and every two years notice.

		<p>expected to act as a reinforcement in the increase of mobile intervention units and the services offered by them. In the context of the program, the design and implementation of training seminars for workers in institutions that provide services to the homeless will be announced additionally. with the aim of providing specialized knowledge to people called to provide streetwork services and creating a pool of specialized social scientists in this field. At the same time, creation of a body to coordinate and monitor the actions implemented at the level of Municipalities. The data collected by this body will be taken into account both during the drafting of the Call for Proposals for the financing of streetwork actions and during the evaluation of the submitted proposals.</p>	<p>Directorate for Combating Poverty - Agencies providing services to the homeless</p>					
<p><b>RE- ENTERMINA TION</b></p>	<p>Action 4.3.1. Housing and Work Program for the homeless</p>	<p>Continue application of the program</p>	<p>Cooperation: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Municipalities -Civil Society Bodies.</p>	<p>Homeless people or families living on the street or in transitional accommodation structures or in day care</p>	<p>600 households/ 800 beneficiaries every two years</p>	<p>The budget amounts to 10 million per two years</p>	<p>Regular budget</p>	<p>Every two years</p>



				structures or in dormitories				
<b>RE- ENTERMINA TION</b>	Action 4.3.2. Inclusion of homeless people in the special social groups of the Public Employment Service	Action that can act as reinforcement in the efforts of organizations to integrate homeless people into the labor market with the aim of their reintegration. At the same time, creation of special training and labor market integration programs exclusively for the homeless.	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - DYPA (former OAED)			No expense is incurred at the expense of the Ministry's budget		Always Open
<b>RE- ENTERMINA TION</b>	Action 4.3.3. Actions to encourage participation in Sports and Culture	Actions to encourage participation in Sports and Culture, as a means of social reintegration of individuals and families living in homeless conditions	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Vulnerable population groups (single-parent families, long-term, unemployed, etc.) facing a lack of housing	200 households/beneficiaries per year	100,000 per year	NSRF 2022-2027	2024-2027
<b>REGISTER EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.4.1. Registration of homeless people	By utilizing the methodology and tools that were developed in the recording carried out in 2018 in 7 Municipalities of the country (electronic recording platform on the road and in structures through structured questionnaires and observation form, recording guides, scientific team,	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Ministry of Digital Governance - Municipalities - Civil Society Bodies	Homeless persons or families living on the street or in transitional accommodation facilities or day care facilities or dormitories	It will result from the registration (based on geographical coverage)	Taking into account the cost of the 2018 registration but also the possible increase of municipalities that will be included in the new registration, it is estimated	Regular Budget / NSRF 2021-2027	Every two years at least one 24-hour period (evening and morning of the next day)

		collaboration with scientific bodies such as universities etc) and adapting them to identify forms of homelessness that are more difficult to identify (housing insecurity, inappropriate accommodation etc), every two years the official registration and updating of the homeless in the capital and in the large urban centers will be carried out.				that the total budget will amount to 60,000 euros every 2 years.		
<b>REGISTER EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.4.2. Electronic register and platform for the interconnection of homeless structures	The launch of the housing application management platform in the second half of 2022 will enable organizations providing services to homeless people to connect electronically, submit and manage housing applications through online monitoring of the availability of beds compatible with the profile of housing applicants. 1) Recording the number of housing requests and their faster service through on-line referrals 2) Extracting data on the profile of people who request housing and are served by homeless structures, 3) Extracting data on the type and quality of	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - IDIKA	All agencies that provide services to homeless individuals and households	will result from housing requests		NSRF 2014 - 2020 / Regular Budget	permanently open

		<p>services provided by homeless structures</p> <p>Training programs for the executives of the Social Services of the Municipalities and Community Centers as first reception services, in issues concerning the homeless and in implemented actions/policies for the specific target group. The start of the first cycle of training seminars took place in November 2022.</p>						
<b>EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.5.1. Training Seminar for professionals on issues of dealing with homelessness		Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Cooperation of the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty & EKDDA	The program is aimed at public sector executives with an emphasis on Social Services executives, in particular: • Social Services and Community Centers of Municipalities • Poverty Alleviation Structures operated by Municipalities or legal entities of Municipalities (dormitories, hostels and open day centers for the homeless, social grocery	The number of beneficiaries per year depends on the annual number of seminars and the expression of interest of the target group. According to the data of the previous seminar, the number of participants-beneficiaries is estimated at a minimum of 160 people	No expense is incurred at the expense of the Ministry's budget		1/11/2022-31/12/2025

				stores and co-operatives, social clinics and pharmacies)• Other social structures operated by Municipalities or legal entities of Municipalities, e.g. help at home, prevention centers, counseling centers, etc. • Social Welfare Centers / National Center for Social Solidarity • Departments of Public Health and Social Solidarity (Social Services) Regions • Social Services of public health facilities • Social Services of penitentiaries				
<b>EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.5.2. Guide to the implementation of emergency response measures	Guide to the implementation of emergency response measures in times of crisis. The guide will be	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Cooperation	All organizations that provide services to homeless people		No expense is incurred at the expense of the		1/7/2023 - 30/9/2024

		an action manual for the management of emergency situations by the agencies that provide services to the target group.	of the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty & services of co-competent Ministries	and households (Closed transitional accommodation- Day centers- Sleeps, care services for homeless people on the street, etc.)		Ministry's budget		
<b>EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.5.3. Homelessness website	Technical upgrade and support of the existing website within the second half of 2022 alongside its regular renewal with data and information on the social integration of the homeless, with the aim of providing information on the agencies and structures providing services to the homeless, homeless reintegration programs, the housing benefit, cold shelters during the winter, the current institutional framework, studies and statistics on homelessness issues, as well as announcements from competent institutional bodies and civil society bodies.	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Cooperation of the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty & Special Expert	Any directly or indirectly interested citizen as well as all social care providers.			NSRF 2014 - 2020 / Regular Budget	permanently open
<b>EDUCATION - UPDATE</b>	Action 4.5.4. Information-awareness campaign to	Funding of information and awareness actions for the homeless. The relevant campaign will be implemented on the	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs,			200,000 euros	Regular budget	2024-2025

	combat the stigma of homelessness	one hand by the creation of appropriate communication material (television, radio spot, information posters) and on the other hand by the organization of awareness and information events and actions at local and national level. Emphasis will be placed on the optimal utilization of the funds already available for the implementation of similar actions within the Housing and Work for the homeless program.						
<b>INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS</b>	Action 4.6.1. Establishment of a National Commission for planning and monitoring policies for the lack of housing		Min. of Labor – G.G. of Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty Min. Labor – C. C. Demographics and Family Policy and Gender Equality Min. Health Min. Interior Min. Immigration Policy Min. Justice EKKA De-addiction bodies of Law 4139/2013	Vulnerable population groups that are threatened or experiencing homelessness,		No expense is incurred at the expense of the Ministry's budget		lasting

			OAED OPECA Administrative Authority KEDE Municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Piraeus Network for the right to shelter and housing Scientific Bodies					
<b>INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS</b>	Action 4.6.2. Creation of an institutional framework for the operation of social leasing agencies	Creation of an institutional framework for the operation of social leasing agencies	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs,			No expense is incurred at the expense of the Ministry's budget		2023-2024
<b>INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS</b>	Action 4.6.3. Search for sponsorships in the framework of utilizing Corporate Social Responsibility programs	Search for sponsorships in the framework of the utilization of Corporate Social Responsibility programs for the preparation of studies and the implementation of repair and restoration works on properties owned by the Ministry, in order to use them in the context of social housing programs or hosting vulnerable individuals and families	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Private sector	Vulnerable population groups (single-parent families, long-term, unemployed, etc.) who are threatened or face a lack of housing,		No expense is incurred at the expense of the Ministry's budget		2025-2030
<b>EVALUATION</b>	Action 4.7.1. Control of effectiveness indicators of	Cost benefit analysis of programs and control of effective use of money. For example, the	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs - Cooperation			€100,000	NSRF 2021 - 2027	2027

	implemented policies	comparison of the cost of accommodation structures and housing first actions, in combination with their effectiveness in terms of the successful reintegration and autonomy of the beneficiaries	with the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and with a special expert					
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- Text of proposals from NGO Metadrasi
- Text of actions and proposals of the E.E.S.
- KEDE letter (proposals for seasonal mobile foreign workers)

B) Related texts from international bibliography and articles & netography

- Measures\_Public\_Authorities\_Must\_Take\_to\_Protect\_Homeless\_People\_from\_Covid\_19\_PDF
- Advice-for-homeless-shelters-and-people-working-with-homelessness-in-covid-19-pandemic
- Climate Change, Weather, Housing Precarity, and Homelessness A Systematic Review of Reviews
- Housing-first-fact-sheet
- Housing-first-and-homelessness-SE
- ELSTAT "RISK OF POVERTY PRESS RELEASE" Household Income and Living Conditions Survey: Year 2020 (Income reference period: Year 2019) Risk of Poverty ( 2020 )
- ELSTAT "MATERIAL DEPRIVATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS PRESS RELEASE" Household Income and Living Conditions Survey: Year 2020 (Income reference period: Year 2019)
- <http://www.redcross.gr/default.asp?pid=160&la=1>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1061&langId=en>
- <https://urbact.eu/good-practices/home>
- <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/homelessness-prevention-guide-good-practice>
- <https://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/03/18/covid19-staying-home-not-an-option-for-people-experiencing-homelessness?bcParent=26>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK218235/>
- Alamanou A., Stamatogiannopoulou E., Theodorikakou O., Katsadoros K., (2011), The configuration of homelessness in Greece during the financial crisis, KLIMAKA NGO – Greece.
- <http://www.klimaka.org.gr/newsite/KoinApok/Astegoi/Astegoi1.htm>
- <http://www.feantsa.org/>
- <https://www.statistics.gr/2021-census-pop-hous>

- [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_21\\_3044](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3044)
- <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/housing-programs/calworks-homeless-assistance>