Fighting homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe

A study of national policies

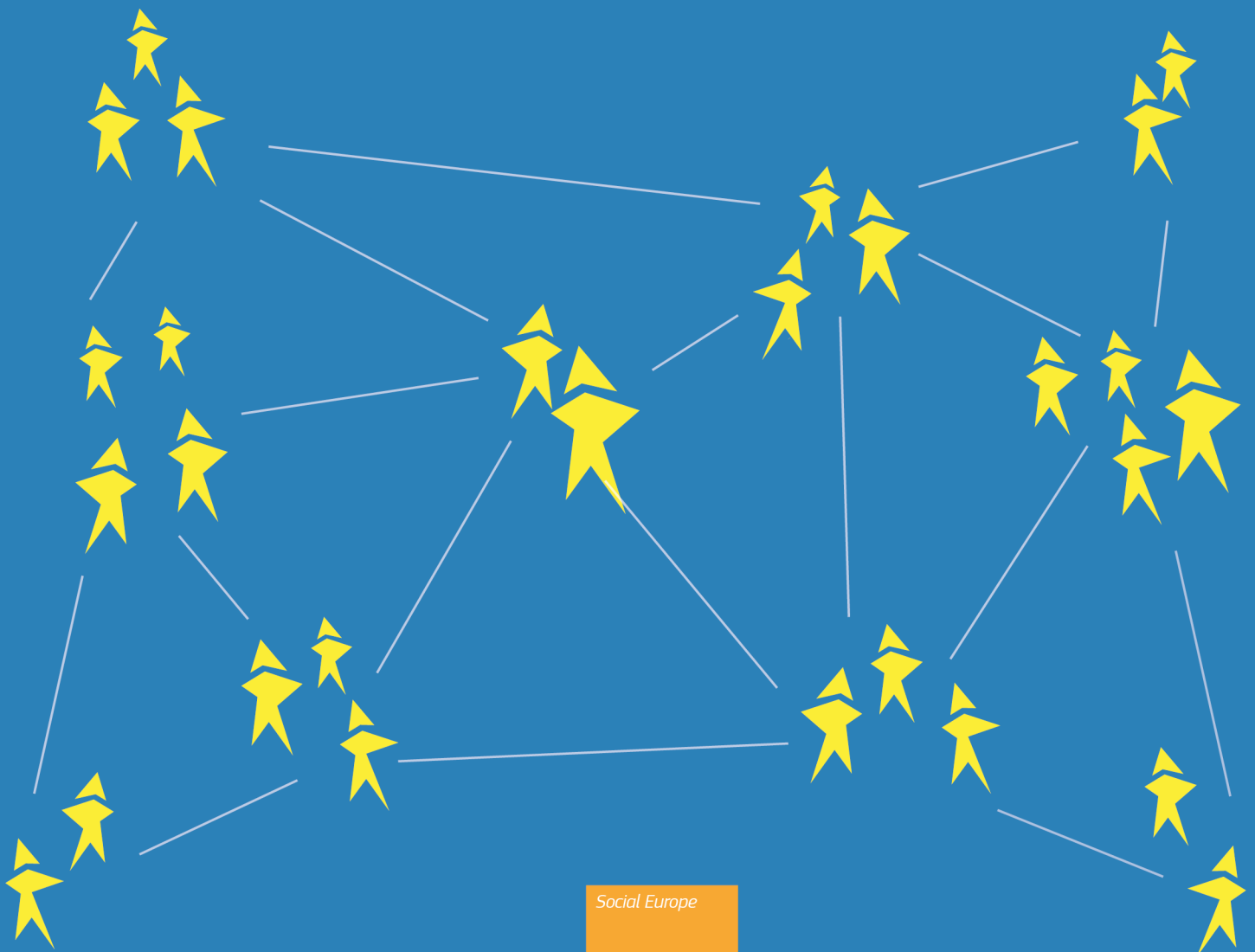Isabel Baptista and Eric Marlier

European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

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2019

Isabel Baptista and Eric Marlier

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was established in July 2014 on the initiative of the European Commission to provide high-quality and timely independent information, advice, analysis and expertise on social policy issues in the European Union and neighbouring countries.

The ESPN brings together into a single network the work that used to be carried out by the European Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, the Network for Analytical Support on the Socio-Economic Impact of Social Protection Reforms (ASISP) and the MISSOC (Mutual Information Systems on Social Protection) secretariat.

The ESPN is managed by the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), APPLICA and the European Social Observatory (OSE).

For more information on the ESPN, see: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1135&langId=en

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OFFICIAL COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS

A. European Union (EU) countries

EU countries prior to 2004, 2007 and 2013 enlargements (EU-15)		EU countries that joined in 2004, 2007 or 2013	
BE	Belgium	*2004 Enlargement*	
DK	Denmark	CZ	Czechia
DE	Germany	EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland	CY	Cyprus
EL	Greece	LV	Latvia
ES	Spain	LT	Lithuania
FR	France	HU	Hungary
IT	Italy	MT	Malta
LU	Luxembourg	PL	Poland
NL	The Netherlands	SI	Slovenia
AT	Austria	SK	Slovakia
PT	Portugal		
FI	Finland	*2007 Enlargement*	
SE	Sweden	BG	Bulgaria
UK	United Kingdom	RO	Romania
		2013 Enlargement	
		HR	Croatia

In EU averages, countries are weighted by their population sizes.

B. EU Candidate countries and potential candidate countries covered by the ESPN

EU candidate countries and potential candidates	
AL	Albania
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
ME	Montenegro
MK	North Macedonia
RS	Serbia
TR	Turkey
XK*	Kosovo *

(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

PREFACE

European policy context

Over almost two decades, several initiatives at the European Union (EU) level have helped to include homelessness as an important topic on the EU agenda. In 2010, the adoption of the Europe 2020 Strategy provided a unique opportunity to boost EU progress on homelessness. For the first time, the EU set a headline social inclusion target – to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion – and Member States committed themselves to adopting national social inclusion targets as part of this strategy.

Since then, there has been increased awareness of the need for more strategic approaches and integrated strategies for fighting homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE). In 2010, the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion called on Member States to develop comprehensive homelessness strategies, providing guidance (Council of Ministers 2010).

The EU Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion recognised a growing trend among Member States "moving in the direction of developing strategies or at least more comprehensive and integrated approaches" (Frazer and Marlier 2009, p. 4), in a context where a number of countries had already developed overall national strategies.

The European Consensus Conference on Homelessness held in Brussels in December 2010 resulted in a set of policy recommendations aimed at providing a sound basis for strengthened "ambition and action" in the area of homelessness. Its conclusions clearly highlighted the need for an integrated strategic approach to homelessness, at both EU and national levels.

The European Parliament's Resolutions adopted in September 2011 and January 2014 urged the European Commission to develop an EU homelessness strategy that could support Member States in taking up the fight against homelessness.

As part of the EU Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted in 2013, the Commission called on Member States to develop integrated national strategies on homelessness, and at the same time committed itself to monitoring progress within the European Semester exercise. The SIP included a Staff Working Document on Confronting Homelessness in the EU, which underlines the need to tackle homelessness through comprehensive strategies based on prevention, housing-led approaches and a review of the regulations and practices on eviction.

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) recognises the right of the homeless to housing and assistance. More specifically, Principle 19 on "Housing and assistance for the homeless" states that:
- access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided to those in need;
- vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction; and
- adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.

In recent cycles, the European Semester has increasingly covered the issue of HHE. This is important in view of the strategic link between the European Semester and the EPSR: the latter (its principles and objectives) is expected to serve as a point of reference for implementation of the former.

The 2019 Joint Employment Report (JER) provides a detailed analysis of the HHE situation in the EU, going beyond the indicators included in the social scoreboard used for monitoring implementation of the EPSR. It highlights important challenges present in several Member States in relation to HHE: the access to housing of good quality, the significant share of household

disposable income spent on housing-related expenditure, rising rents and the recent increase in homelessness.

Preventing and tackling HHE remains a significant challenge within a diverse European territory. However, progress is being made. The emergence of innovative dynamics in policy-making, involving a wide range of public and private stakeholders, and a growing convergence towards adopting strategic approaches to social problems, are positive developments highlighted by the present Synthesis Report. But as Pleace et al. (2018) recall, "perhaps the most important change in recent years in terms of reducing and preventing homelessness is the presence of a map to solving homelessness". A demonstrably effective response exists and "can be used at a strategic level that will bring numbers down significantly and greatly reduce the risks of experiencing homelessness and, particularly, of experiencing homelessness for any amount of time or on a repeated basis". While implementing such a "map" is inevitably a task to be carried out by Member States, coherent EU monitoring of progress achieved with regard to HHE would provide a crucial framework for enhancing effective development in the future.

A Synthesis Report from the European Social Policy Network

With a view to strengthening the Semester analysis and improving policy guidance to Member States on effective strategies and investment gaps to support their efforts in eradicating HHE in their territories, the European Commission asked the national experts of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN) to describe and analyse existing evidence, policy approaches and overall strategic frameworks addressing HHE, and to assess their respective effectiveness.

This Synthesis Report a) analyses the extent, profile, trends and main drivers of HHE using existing definitions of HHE across Europe, in relation to the *European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)*[1]; b) describes existing national or regional strategic approaches to homelessness and discusses the extent to which such strategic approaches are being adequately funded, monitored and implemented, including evidence on their effectiveness; c) examines current patterns of service provision for homeless people, including a discussion about the main approaches underpinning current responses to HHE, the identification of main service providers and recent innovations; d) assesses the main systemic causes limiting and/or enhancing effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness; and e) performs a comparative overview of the main challenges and priorities for improvement identified at the national level.

The report illustrates the main trends and challenges in national strategic approaches to HHE through examples. Countries which have developed along similar lines are listed in brackets (e.g. AT, BE, BG) so that the reader interested in knowing more about these can examine the 35 ESPN national experts' reports[2]. In producing their reports, national ESPN experts cite many different sources in support of their analysis. References to these are not included in the present report. Readers wishing to follow up the original sources should consult the individual experts' reports.

This Synthesis Report draws on the national contributions prepared by the 35 ESPN Country Teams[3]. It was written by Isabel Baptista (independent social policy expert) and Eric Marlier (Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research [LISER]) of the ESPN's Network Core Team, with helpful comments and suggestions from the ESPN Country Teams, from Ramón Peña-Casas (ESPN Network Core Team) and from Hugh Frazer (Maynooth University, Ireland). Comments and

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[1] The ETHOS typology is available at https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion.

[2] Here and throughout the report, the countries in brackets are provided as examples and the lists are not necessarily exhaustive.

[3] For a presentation of the ESPN Network Core Team and the 35 ESPN Country Teams, see Annex D. The 35 ESPN national experts' reports here (ESPN page on the European Commission website).

suggestions from the European Commission are also gratefully acknowledged. All errors remain strictly the authors' responsibility.

The first section of the report examines the extent and nature of HHE in Europe. The second section discusses the strategies and policies tackling HHE in Europe. Finally, Section 3 analyses the nature and patterns of homelessness service provision in Europe.[4]

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[4] We would like to thank Rachel Cowler for her editorial support.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of integrated strategic approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) is key to achieving the necessary shift towards rights-based solutions, to ending HHE and to successfully delivering on Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. While progress is being achieved, through the emergence of innovative dynamics in policy making and a growing convergence towards adopting strategic approaches to HHE, preventing and tackling this phenomenon remains a significant challenge within Europe.

Based on in-depth national contributions prepared by the 35 Country Teams of the European Social Policy Network (ESPN), this Synthesis Report outlines the following ten key findings.

1. **There are both consistencies and variations regarding the way in which homelessness is defined across Europe.**

   Two thirds of ESPN Country Teams report the existence of some kind of "official" and/or "recognised" definition of homelessness in their countries. These formal definitions, however, do not necessarily entail any legal and/or policy obligation concerning the provision of accommodation or other kind of support; they rather imply recognition of the phenomenon.

   The use of the ETHOS[5]-Light typology, as a reference framework for reporting on the categories of people defined as homeless in the 35 "ESPN countries", has proved to be particularly useful for addressing comparability challenges.

   Overall, people sleeping rough, staying in emergency/temporary accommodation services, and those living in inadequate living spaces or in places which cannot be considered "regular housing units" are the most common references used in existing official definitions across Europe.

   A comparison between the presence/absence of the various living situations encompassed by the six ETHOS-Light operational categories among the 35 countries reveals a clear trend: the more visible the HHE situation (e.g. rough sleeping, living in emergency shelters), the higher the probability of that condition being defined as homelessness. In fact, people living rough are almost everywhere defined as being homeless, the only exception being Kosovo[6]. On the other hand, only 14 countries include "people living temporarily with family and friends, due to lack of housing" in their homelessness definition and, out of these, only four are actually able to provide data on the extent of this phenomenon.

2. **Currently it is not possible to determine the real extent of homelessness in Europe.**

   The availability and nature of data on the extent of homelessness in Europe vary widely among the 35 ESPN countries. In some countries, there are national, regional or even city-level statistics, while in others only estimates of the level of homelessness are available. Additionally, the figures provided are based on diverse definitions of homelessness, and diverse living situations are therefore covered by those figures in the different countries.

   It is, therefore, not possible to provide an overall figure on the number of homeless people in the 35 countries. Rather, we can give the existing statistics and/or estimates available in each country, on the different living situations covered by ETHOS-Light.

   The availability and variability of data-related challenges can be clearly illustrated by the figures reported by ESPN national experts on the one category – people living rough – which is

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[5] ETHOS is the "European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion".

[6] (*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

almost unanimously defined as homeless: i) national-level data on people sleeping rough are available in only 60% of the countries covered by the study; and ii) the extent of the phenomenon varies, from six people recorded in Malta in 2017, to 150,000 people sleeping rough according to NGO estimates in Turkey.

3. **Homelessness and housing exclusion on the increase in Europe.**

Broadly speaking, ESPN experts in 24 out of the 28 EU countries report that homelessness has increased over the last decade. Several experts even report substantial rises (an increase of between 16 and 389%) in the number of homeless people over the last decade, based on existing statistics. Finland is the only EU Member State where homelessness has decreased significantly over the last two to three decades. Three countries show either mixed patterns (Croatia and Poland) or a stabilisation of homelessness (Portugal) over recent years.

Conversely, experts from four non-EU Member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia) report downward trends in the number of homeless people, i.e. in the number of refugees, repatriated persons and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

4. **Housing market pressures are the main determinant behind HHE increases.**

Strong pressures – either long-standing or more recent – on affordable housing/ the social housing supply have been identified by ESPN experts across the majority of EU Member States as a key driver for rises in homelessness over the last ten years. These negative developments are multiple, and include: steep increases in property and rental prices, increasing scarcity of low-cost housing, changes in tenancy laws, liberalisation of rents, limited or reduced public investment in public and/or social housing, increased insecurity of tenure, low and inadequate levels of housing support, cuts in housing allowances, stricter eligibility criteria for accessing social housing, and rising evictions.

Other adverse factors operating at structural and systemic level, identified across many ESPN countries, include: poverty, rising unemployment and exclusion of homeless people from the labour market, precarious and low-wage short-term employment, legal provisions increasing the risk of eviction, insufficient welfare benefits, inadequate and/or difficult access to support systems and services, and rising immigration. Homelessness risk factors operating at the individual level have also been identified: relating to individual vulnerabilities (e.g. mental illness, substance abuse) and adverse family dynamics (e.g. family violence, relationship breakdown and/or family conflicts).

Positive drivers for the consistent (and evidence-based) fall in homelessness in Finland over the last decades include the adoption of a long-term strategic policy response, a multi-level political commitment to ending homelessness and a shared collaborative approach in policy and service provision.

5. **Integrated strategic responses to homelessness and housing exclusion are on the increase across the EU, although evidence of their effectiveness remains scarce.**

National, regional and/or local strategies aiming at the delivery of integrated strategic responses to homelessness are reported by experts in 16 EU Member States. In Greece, the first national homelessness strategy has been drafted and already announced and in Slovakia a new comprehensive strategy on homelessness is currently being prepared.

Important common elements within such integrated strategic frameworks include an increasing shift towards housing-led and/or Housing First services, recognition of the crucial role of homelessness prevention services, and the implementation of multi-level and multi-sectoral governance structures aimed at enhancing cooperation in policy and delivery.

In several Eastern European countries (BG, HR, PL, RO, AL, MK, RS, XK) ESPN experts report the presence of broader national strategies – i.e. focusing on areas such as social inclusion, housing, poverty and social exclusion or on specific population groups/communities – which include more or less extensive and/or targeted measures directly addressing homelessness.

Eastern Europe is also the region with the largest proportion of countries lacking any specific approach to HHE – either through a targeted approach to HHE or within another wider strategy.

There is considerable variation in the amount of evidence available on implementation and monitoring outcomes. This mostly reflects the robustness or, conversely, the frailty of operation or absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms regarding existing strategic approaches to HHE.

In the majority of countries where specific targeted approaches to HHE have been implemented within specific national, regional or local strategies, ESPN experts highlight a lack of robust evidence-based mechanisms assessing implementation progress, which hinders regular assessment of the effectiveness of such strategies.

Denmark, Finland, France and Ireland provide the best examples of countries where the implementation of national homelessness strategies is being regularly monitored. Other countries – although less systematically – also have evidence on progress being achieved and/or challenges to be overcome.

Outcomes of such evaluations show some positive achievements (e.g. Housing First positive impacts on housing sustainment outcomes, positive financial returns from using specific housing support methods such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), increased allocation of social housing, positive impact of rapid re-housing actions for families with children, and effectiveness of prevention support in avoiding evictions). They also reveal challenges still to be successfully addressed (e.g. the negative impacts of legislative changes, the need to ensure access to existing support systems among households threatened by homelessness, the negative impacts of the economic crisis on the local authorities' capacity to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, and the real operationalisation of monitoring structures).

Overall, the evidence reported shows important and consistent progress being made in some (if only a few) EU Member States, but mostly it demonstrates the need to significantly strengthen demonstrable effective evidence-based policies.

6. **The level and adequacy of funding mechanisms: overall challenges and localised examples of key financial support.**

Broadly speaking, the most noticeable outcome of the comparative analysis of the evidence provided across the 35 countries under scrutiny is the overall insufficient (in relation to existing needs) and inadequate (due to the limited impact on the ability to solve homelessness) funding devoted to preventing and fighting HHE across Europe.

In a large majority of countries, ESPN experts report one or several of the following issues from their assessment of the current development of funding mechanisms: evidence of recent reductions in the level of funding for the development of policies and programmes, absence of funding mechanisms within national strategic approaches to homelessness, sustainability challenges related to short-term financing models, strong differentiation of funding capacity among different municipalities and/or regions directly affecting the level and quality of HHE responses, and threats to the maintenance of national-level resources following the end of international financial support.

Examples of positive aspects and/or developments with regard to the adequacy of existing funding mechanisms are reported by a minority of experts (e.g. CY, LU, MT, SK, NL). These

positive aspects include: significant investment in promoting permanent housing for families and social housing, (broadly) adequate financing mechanisms and increased funds for the implementation of national strategies, recent increases in budget allocations for the funding of homelessness services (although not necessarily meeting existing and increasing needs), legislative changes which may strengthen municipalities' control over budgets (paving the way for more adequate models of service provision), and city-level commitments to increase budgets for developing homelessness service provision.

ESPN experts in non-EU countries (e.g. BA, ME, MK, RS) raise an important specific issue regarding available funding mechanisms for addressing HHE: the important role of international financial support, which constitutes a key source of funding for the development of relevant programmes addressing HHE (e.g. housing reconstruction programmes, operation of support services). In Kosovo, diaspora funding constitutes an additional relevant (and unique) source of financing for addressing HHE in the country.

The role of EU funding is deemed important by a minority of experts. With the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, these are all EU Member States, mostly Eastern European countries.

The main reasons underlying the key role of such funding support are related either to the nature of the support provided (e.g. enhancing innovative services, strengthening existing capacity building, ensuring the operationalisation of existing strategic approaches to HHE), or to the impact of such funding within overall resources dedicated to tackling HHE (e.g. ensuring the operation of the majority of homelessness service provision, enabling the implementation of return and resettlement programmes).

Two main arguments are put forward by experts in those countries – the majority – where EU funding does not play an important role in strategically addressing HHE: i) the focus of the EU support does not directly address relevant HHE issues; and ii) the level of EU funding addressing HHE is comparatively limited in relation to total funding, and its impact is restricted.

7. **The growing presence of housing-led services within an overall prevailing staircase model of service provision.**

   "Housing-ready" services seem to be strongly present within a staircase model of service provision (i.e. the provision of temporary accommodation and support usually on a single site, with on-site support staff) across the overwhelming majority of ESPN countries. In most countries, that is, the different types of support aim at assisting homeless people with their needs through various forms of temporary housing support, up to the point where they are ready to live independently in their own home.

   However, in several countries, there is evidence of shifts occurring in the overall pattern of service provision, towards a system where more intensive services are provided together with access to permanent accommodation (e.g. AT, BE, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, SI). In others, the staircase model is still dominant, but there is evidence of small-scale Housing First programmes within overall homelessness service provision (e.g. HU, PT, RO, SE, SK).

   In a smaller number of countries, the provision of housing-based solutions is the predominant approach. Such an approach, however, can vary significantly, ranging from a widespread use of housing-focused, housing-led mobile support services as the core of existing homelessness responses (e.g. DK, FI, NL), to the provision of housing assistance for vulnerable and low-income groups, namely IDPs, returnees, Roma households, and repatriated persons (e.g. AL, XK).

   ESPN experts identify a wide range of support services, including emergency and temporary accommodation, non-residential support, housing-led, Housing First and prevention services.

Emergency and temporary accommodation and non-residential support services are largely present across the 35 countries under scrutiny. There is widespread provision of non-housing-focused support within these different categories of services. However, housing-focused support services and more specialised services are, to a greater or lesser extent, also present in a considerable number of countries.

The provision of services preventing HHE in Europe comprises a wide range of support activities, but reveals a paucity of integrated and comprehensive systems combining housing advice, mediation and support services, as well as specialised support targeted at specific high-need groups. Additionally, a comparative analysis highlights the need to strengthen the setting up of procedures for the early detection of HHE risk situations (e.g. evictions), and to ensure prioritised access to housing and/or rapid rehousing.

8. **Housing First: a growing innovative presence in Europe.**

Housing First services are present in most EU Member States. However, the extent to which such services have been developed varies greatly.

In a few countries, Housing First services are described by ESPN experts as either already established as an integral part of homelessness policies (e.g. BE, DK, FI, FR, LU, NL) or as increasing quickly and/or restructuring the traditional approach to addressing homelessness (e.g. AT, ES, IE, IT, SE, UK). In several other countries (e.g. CZ, DE, HR, HU, PT, SI, SK), the implementation of Housing First programmes has mostly been restricted to a limited number of projects, with differences in scale and provision.

Additionally, the geographical distribution of Housing First services shows stronger coverage across Western Europe and parts of Northern and Southern Europe, and weaker dissemination across Eastern European countries. None of the seven ESPN non-EU countries' experts report the presence of Housing First services in their countries.

Finally, the introduction/development of Housing First services is, by far, the most cited innovation in the last five years: ESPN experts in 14 countries, covering a wide geographical area across the EU, consider Housing First as the major recent innovation in homelessness service provision. Other less significant areas of innovation relate to: developments within traditional service provision, legislative changes, strengthening of coordination mechanisms, housing provision, data improvements, and increased effectiveness of services.

9. **Responsibility and effectiveness of service provision.**

Overall, responsibility for the provision of homelessness services lies almost exclusively with local-level institutions/organisations, with a very significant role played by NGOs, civil society organisations, charities and local authorities.

The role of private actors is mostly centred on the provision of support – either directly or commissioned by public authorities. They are more rarely involved in other activities, such as monitoring, evaluation or funding.

Public authorities – operating at the local level – are also pivotal stakeholders as regards the main responsibilities for homelessness service provision. In some countries (e.g. DE, DK, ES, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SE), municipalities are reported by ESPN experts as having a wide range of responsibilities, encompassing not only the provision of assistance to homeless people, but also planning, coordinating, regulating, monitoring and/or funding the provision of services. The area of responsibility most frequently reported in relation to the role of central governments is the provision of funding. In a smaller number of countries (e.g. AT, BE, CZ, DE, ES), regional

authorities also play an important role in the planning, coordination and/or regulation of homelessness service provision and – to a lesser extent – in the funding of such services.

There is a paucity of evidence allowing a reliable assessment of the effectiveness of homelessness services in the majority of the 35 ESPN countries. Furthermore, there seems to be an overall lack of evaluation regarding the effectiveness of those services which represent the bulk of homelessness service provision across countries, i.e. non-housing-focused services such as emergency and temporary accommodation and non-residential services (e.g. day centres, outreach teams, food distribution).

On the other hand, Housing First services – and to a lesser extent prevention services – are by far the area of provision where most evidence on (positive) results is available, thus allowing a better and more robust assessment of the effectiveness of the support provided.

10. **Main systemic causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness and housing exclusion.**

In general, homelessness is envisaged as being primarily caused by a complex and intertwined set of constraints related to the design of housing policies and to the operation of housing markets across virtually all 35 countries analysed. Most ESPN experts identified housing-related causes as the main systemic causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of HHE and/or hindering the potential of HHE prevention policies.

A widespread lack of affordable housing, arising from a wide range of inter-related factors (e.g. tenure insecurity, increased evictions, poor housing quality, overcrowding and specific barriers in access to housing) contributes to the complex structural nature of housing-related hindrances.

Poverty, unemployment, the low level of welfare benefits, the lack of social protection, and the changing nature of work leading to less secure and low-age employment are also mentioned as important structural causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of HHE and contributing to increased risks of HHE.

Organisational factors (e.g. lack of information on existing services, unequal access and uneven quality of services provided, barriers restraining access to services, lack of human resources), legal obstacles (e.g. lack of documents, regularisation procedures) and individual and family-related causes (e.g. divorce and/or separation, family violence, drug and alcohol addiction problems, and health and mental health problems) are also reported by several ESPN experts within this complex set of inter-related hindrances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While progress is being achieved by an increasing number of the European countries engaging in the development of integrated strategic approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE), there has been an overall upward trend in HHE across Europe over the last decade.

Increasing research evidence on what actually works has shown that a demonstrable effective strategic response to ending homelessness can be successful both in preventing HHE and in ensuring stable and sustainable ways out of HHE exclusion.

This section primarily proposes recommendations to the 35 countries under scrutiny and recommendations to be handled at EU level. These recommendations build on the main outcomes of the comparative analysis of the national reports prepared by the 35 ESPN Country Teams, and on the priorities for improvement identified in these reports.

Recommendations to countries

Adopting harmonised and legally binding definitions

- Countries should adopt an official definition of HHE and apply it consistently. The definition should build on the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) adopted by the Jury of the 2010 European Consensus Conference on Homelessness.

- Definitions of HHE used by countries should move beyond the current narrow formal definitions, which limit the understanding of the nature and extent of the phenomenon in Europe. Too often, many living situations which are not immediately obvious (e.g. people living temporarily with family and friends due to a lack of housing, or people living in institutions and due to be released with no home to go to) are currently not being recognised or counted.

- Countries should ensure that existing official definitions of HHE result in a legal obligation and/or implementation of policy measures aiming at the provision of accommodation and/or other necessary support.

Strengthening data collection mechanisms and research evidence

- Countries should set up proper long-term arrangements with regard to data collection on HHE, based on an agreed common EU framework and guidelines for measuring and monitoring the extent and evolution of HHE.

- Data collection mechanisms should be anchored in inclusive definitions of HHE and regular monitoring exercises.

- There should be a strengthening among relevant stakeholders of capacity building with regard to collecting and analysing HHE data.

- The use of EU indicators on housing should be promoted, as a means to emphasise the housing-related drivers contributing to HHE.

- Research evidence on HHE should be strengthened. Even in countries where homelessness research is more extensive, there is scope for strengthening the existing evidence base on less visible forms of homelessness or less investigated areas (e.g. family homelessness, women's homelessness, impact of homelessness on children, youth homelessness, homelessness among the elderly, homelessness among migrant populations).

Developing integrated comprehensive HHE strategies supported by strong political and institutional commitment and shared responsibility

- Countries which have not already done so should consider developing integrated strategic frameworks to prevent and reduce HHE. These strategies should combine extensive preventative mechanisms with an array of housing-focused support services (e.g. housing-led, Housing First services, social housing programmes) addressing the needs of diverse and heterogeneous sectors of the homeless population (e.g. people with high support needs, homeless families, young people leaving institutions).

- HHE strategies should be built on a shared vision of homelessness (based on robust data collection) and on collaborative frameworks bringing together all stakeholders, ensuring extensive cooperation and coordination between the various pertinent sectors.

- HHE strategies should provide a strategic framework for significantly strengthening demonstrable effective evidence-based policies.

- In developing their HHE strategies, countries need to ensure regular reporting mechanisms (supported by efficient monitoring and assessment tools) as well as clear and adequate allocation of resources.

Addressing the main drivers for homelessness and housing exclusion

- The provision of affordable and accessible housing should be at the forefront of housing policies. To achieve this goal, countries should envisage several initiatives aimed at overcoming the most significant identified hindrances in this area:
  - expanding the social housing sector and reinstating its potential affordability role;
  - changing the mechanisms for allocating the existing public housing stock (to avoid restraining access to homeless people in general or to certain sectors of the homeless population);
  - strengthening rent control mechanisms; enhancing secure occupancy in the private rented sector;
  - ensuring that HHE is comprehensively integrated into overall housing plans or strategies;
  - improving tenancy rights among private renters in unregulated housing markets;
  - ensuring an adequate balance of the provision of affordable housing in relation to existing demand;
  - creating incentives for municipalities to enhance the development of affordable housing solutions; and
  - creating housing offers which are safer and more responsive to specific sectors of the homeless population (e.g. young people, women and the elderly).

- Countries should develop comprehensive policies aimed at addressing the impact of joblessness, the increase of precarious and low-wage jobs, indebtedness and other structural and systemic-driven factors which increase the risk of homelessness. Certain measures could be pursued or reinforced within this objective, such as:
  - providing adequate transfers to low income households (e.g. adequate minimum income schemes);
  - widening access to social benefits for all homeless people irrespective of their nationality or their residence status;
  - ensuring that housing allowance systems (where they exist) provide adequate compensation levels for the real housing costs of low-income households;

- o regularly assessing impacts of changes to welfare benefits (including housing allowances);
  - o addressing system inefficiencies resulting from complex administrative procedures which inhibit access of the most vulnerable groups to existing support; and
  - o introducing and/or strengthening mechanisms aimed at fighting inequalities (particularly income disparities).

- HHE risk factors operating at the individual and family level should also be the focus of strategic policy responses. These may include: providing specialised and intensive support to homeless people with complex needs; setting up integrated and comprehensive preventative systems, encompassing actions ranging from the early detection of homelessness risk situations (e.g. evictions) to rapid re-housing arrangements; providing specific responses to homelessness due to family violence, prioritising the housing needs of women and children escaping domestic violence; delivering specialist healthcare provision for homeless people ultimately designed to ensure integration into mainstream services; ensuring adequate resourcing of key sectors, providing more specialised care to high-need groups (e.g. psychiatric support).

Improving the adequacy of funding mechanisms

- Countries should ensure sufficient funding in their fight against HHE: this is a crucial pre-condition for any effective policy response which aims at preventing and reducing – rather than "managing" – HHE.

- Countries should invest in sustainable housing solutions for people affected by HHE.

- Financing mechanisms supporting HHE policies and services should promote the expansion of demonstrably effective evidence-based approaches to HHE (e.g. Housing First and housing-led services, preventative actions, the use of intensive floating support methods).

- Existing disparities between the funding capacity of municipalities and regions should be reduced, thus narrowing the considerable variations in the level and quality of HHE support services within countries.

- Transparency in funding allocation procedures should be enhanced, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms strengthened.

- Earmarked funding should be encouraged for measures and services related to HHE.

- Mechanisms should be devised to ensure the financial sustainability of successful programmes and projects, particularly those implemented through EU or other international financial support.

- Stronger take-up of EU funding should be encouraged and supported, as a tool to effectively address HHE.

Service provision development

- Countries with a very limited system of support services should expand the range of services available for people affected by HHE, adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach which effectively responds to the underlying causes of the phenomenon.

- Housing-focused solutions should be understood as a right, rather than being conditional on behavioural responses and/or "achievements".

- Support should be given to the expansion of housing-focused solutions (e.g. housing-led and Housing First services) ensuring secure accommodation, with the delivery of support services as required, as key to enhancing people's pathways out of homelessness.

- Solutions which prioritise possibilities of "floating support" provided at the recipient's own home should be strongly encouraged.

- Services should be made more proactive in providing the necessary support for preventing HHE risk situations, and for reaching out to people who are less likely to approach the HHE sector services.

- Rapid rehousing solutions should be prioritised as the main response to crisis homelessness situations, leaving a minimal emergency role for shelters.

- The provision of quality non-housing-focused support services should be guaranteed for homeless people whose condition contributes to them being excluded from care services available for those living in stable housing.

- Hotels/hostels and other low-threshold non-permanent solutions should not be used to accommodate homeless families, other than for a few days only, in emergency situations when there are no other permanent options immediately available.

- Quick access to affordable and secure accommodation should be prioritised for those families who experience emergency episodes of homelessness.

- Strong preventative interventions should be put in place to target families at risk of homelessness.

- A child's perspective should be (more strongly) used to assess and validate the experience of support services.

- The regulation of quality and set standards of provision for accommodation and other support services (e.g. healthcare and social care) should be improved, with a view to contributing to more effective and inclusive outcomes.

- Mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of support services and respective outcomes should be strengthened.

- Cooperation mechanisms within the homelessness sector should be enhanced, as should its dialogue capacity at relevant policy levels.

- There should be further cooperation and exchange between the homelessness and the domestic violence (DV) sectors, with a view to better responding to the needs of women escaping violence and using homelessness support services, and to improving the housing outcomes of the support provided within the DV sector.

- Data recording mechanisms should be improved, ensuring respect for privacy and personal data protection, and the knowledge accumulated should be used to promote service change and better outcomes for homeless people.

- Ongoing reappraisal of existing practice should be promoted, stimulating understanding of homelessness dynamics and impacts, as should the role of effective responses to homelessness which recognise and respond to people's rights and restore dignity.

EU level recommendations

- The European Union should make tackling HHE a key priority in its post-2020 strategy.

- The European Commission together with the Social Protection Committee (SPC) should build upon the strategic links between the European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights, to ensure that HHE becomes a visible and important issue in the main social and economic policy process of the EU.

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

- A coherent EU framework should be devised for the regular monitoring of progress achieved with regard to HHE, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders at national and EU levels.

- An EU homelessness action plan should be developed, ensuring coherent planning and consistent access to support services in all Member States for migrant people experiencing homelessness.

- Strong support (e.g. through mutual learning activities and programming of social investment) should be given to Member States in the implementation and dissemination of strategy responses to HHE which have proven to deliver positively and decisively in preventing and reducing HHE.

- Existing evidence and research should be built on to support dissemination of evidence-based effective responses and knowledge sharing, taking notably into account identified geographical disparities within Europe.

- The social implications of barriers in access to affordable housing for a growing proportion of the population and, notably, for especially vulnerable groups (e.g. young people) should be seriously addressed within the EU policy process.

- Strong support should be given to Member States' initiatives to find long-term solutions to homelessness, by encouraging changes in the systems, from the traditional and largely dominant non-housing-focused delivery of service provision towards sustainable, rights-based and effective responses (e.g. Housing First and housing-led services).

- Guidance and support initiatives should be developed to foster the use of EU funding as a lever to fight HHE.

- Member States' initiatives to criminalise homelessness and other forms of hostile measures against the poor and marginalised sectors of the population should be strongly opposed; rather, alternative evidence-based policies and measures to promote social inclusion and tackle marginalisation should be promoted.

- The European Commission and the SPC should collaborate closely and regularly with EU organisations working in the field of homelessness, making use of their knowledge, experience and ability to pool expertise across a wide range of multi-level and multi-sector stakeholders.

- Tackling child HHE should be a key element in the EU's efforts to tackle poverty and social exclusion among children, through the implementation of the 2013 EU Recommendation on *Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage*, the implementation of Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and in any future EU Child Guarantee.

1 EXTENT AND NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE

Homelessness is an extreme manifestation of poverty and social exclusion; it reduces a person's dignity as well as their productive potential and is a waste of human capital (European Commission 2013). At present, there is no consensus concerning the most valid and reliable methods to measure and monitor homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) in Europe. Definitions and measurements vary significantly across Europe, making it difficult to assess the extent of the phenomenon in comparative terms.

In fact, the term HHE refers to a varied typology of living situations, from the most visible (rough sleeping) to the situation of people living in forms of inadequate and insecure housing, or in more "hidden" situations (e.g. people temporarily living with acquaintances or relatives during a spell of housing exclusion). These forms of hidden homelessness are not visible to the public as people may have temporary housing, but they lack the stability of having a permanent address and they are not the same as staying with family or friends out of choice (Crawley et al. 2013). Measuring homelessness based on administrative data on those people who are in contact with services may lead us to underestimate these "hidden" situations. Women experiencing homelessness are often underrepresented if the extent and nature of homelessness is measured using only administrative data (Pleace 2016).

Defining homelessness is also important "because the wider the definition of homelessness, the wider the range of services and supports that tend to be provided. If homelessness is just defined as people living rough, only a relatively small range of services focused on a comparatively small population is required. If the problem is seen as encompassing hidden homelessness, there are more women, more families, and a much wider range of homeless people more generally, as well as bigger numbers of people involved." (Pleace et al. 2018). At the 2010 European Consensus Conference on homelessness (which brought together key experts to address six key questions on homelessness policy at EU level), stakeholders and the European Commission agreed on a European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)[7], which has been acknowledged as the standard definition of homelessness (Jury of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness 2011).

A specialist version of ETHOS, known as ETHOS-Light, was also developed by FEANTSA with a view to simplifying the comparable measurement of homelessness both within and across countries. This harmonised definition has been developed for use in surveys and for statistical purposes. It contains six operational categories of HHE as well as definitions which correspond to 12 different living situations (see Annex A).

This section begins by contextualising the evidence to be provided on the nature and extent of homelessness across Europe. It does so by presenting the existing official definitions of homelessness, including the identification of those ETHOS-Light categories which current country definitions define as homelessness (Sub-section 1.1). This sub-section provides the basis for an overall analysis of the existing evidence on the extent and profile of homelessness across Europe, which is the focus of Sub-sections 1.2 and 1.3. Finally, Sub-section 1.4 highlights the main homelessness trends over the last ten years, and discusses the major findings arising from the assessment made by ESPN national experts of the main drivers explaining those overall trends.

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[7] The ETHOS typology is available at https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion.

1.1   Defining homelessness and housing exclusion: harmonisation challenges

The so far unsuccessful use of a shared standard (e.g. the definition of homelessness used by Member States in the 2011 Population and Housing Census) has made it difficult to assess the extent of homelessness across EU countries (Baptista et al. 2012). Yet, progress is being made in defining and measuring homelessness in Europe, and the use of harmonised definitions, even if these are not fully adopted by each and every country, is an important step towards a more comparable overview of the prevalence of homelessness.

The 35 ESPN national experts were asked to provide existing (if any) official definitions used in their countries in the context of national/regional strategy(ies) addressing HHE. They were also asked to review the categories of the ETHOS-Light typology, indicating which of the situations listed in this typology are included in the definition of homelessness used in their country and which are not. Tables 1 and 2 below present an overview of the national situation in each country.

Table 1: (Official) Definitions of homelessness currently used in Europe

Countries	Definitions of homelessness
AT (Austria)	No official national definition. Administrative definitions usually address roofless people (people living rough and people in emergency accommodation/night-shelter) and people living in short-term or longer-term accommodation for homeless people.
BE (Belgium)	No national definition. Administrative definition (used by the municipal public centres for social welfare): A homeless person is a person who does not have their own housing, who does not have the resources to provide this on their own or is residing or staying temporarily in a home until housing is made available.[8]
BG (Bulgaria)	A homeless person is a person who does not own a home, is unable to rent a home with their own funds and is not placed in a municipal dwelling under the Municipal Property Act and/or who, due to incidental circumstances (fire, natural disasters, collapse of a building, etc.), has remained without shelter.
CY (Cyprus)	No official definition of homelessness. Definition used by the Council of Community Volunteering of the municipality of Germasogeia (in relation to the building of a temporary accommodation centre for the homeless): Homelessness includes cases of persons without secure housing or persons who live in rough conditions. Homeless persons are all those living legally in the country and without or with only insecure access to adequate owned or rented housing (adequate housing is housing that fulfils all the necessary requirements and has the basic water and electricity amenities). In particular, people living rough on the street, in temporary facilities or who are temporarily hosted in the homes of relatives are regarded as homeless, as well as those living in inappropriate accommodation.
CZ (Czechia)	Homelessness is understood as a process, from losing one's home to the possibility of returning and the actual return to the common way of life, or as a situation which covers any stage of this process. The risk of losing one's home is a process which begins with the occurrence of the risk of being excluded from housing.
DE (Germany)	No official definition of homelessness.
DK (Denmark)	No official definition of homelessness. Yet, according to article 110 of the Law on Social Services, municipalities have an obligation to offer temporary housing to persons with special social problems who do not have or cannot stay in their own home, and who need housing provision and offers of activation support, care and subsequent help. In addition, the biannual measurement of homelessness uses a definition covering the various ETHOS-Light categories (except for category 5). Its definition is referred to by other actors, including public authorities.

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[8] The municipal public centres for social welfare ("CPAS"/ "OCMW") provide a substantial part of assistance to homeless people throughout the country. This definition is set out in a law of 26 May 2002 concerning the right to social integration.

Countries	Definitions of homelessness
EE (Estonia)	A homeless person is a person who has no legal relationship (ownership, permanent contract, tenancy) with any building or room qualifying as a living space and who does not have the necessary income or social skills to change their situation.
EL (Greece)	Homeless people are all persons legally residing in the country who lack access or have precarious access to adequate, privately owned, rented or freely released housing (adequate housing is housing that meets various technical requirements and has basic amenities for water and electricity). The homeless include especially those who live in the streets or in hostels, those who are lodged, out of need, temporarily in institutions or other closed structures, as well as those who live in inappropriate accommodation.
ES (Spain)	Homeless people include operational categories one to four of the ETHOS-Light typology.
FI (Finland)	The homeless are people who: 1) are sleeping rough (mainly in emergency overnight shelters); 2) live in dormitories or in hostels, etc.); 3) live in various institutions for homeless people; 4) temporarily live with their relatives or friends due to a lack of own housing. They also include: 5) prisoners who have no proper accommodation when released from a penal institution; and 6) a catch-all category ("all other homeless people").
FR (France)	A person is considered to be homeless if they spent the night preceding the national survey on homelessness in: i) a place not meant for human habitation, such as a street, park, car park, stairwell including night spots (offering warmth, hot drinks, etc. but not equipped for sleeping)[9]; or ii) an accommodation service (hotel or housing paid by an association, room or dormitory in collective accommodation, premises exceptionally opened up during extreme cold weather).
HR (Croatia)	Homeless people are persons who have no place of residence, reside in a public place or another place not intended for housing and have no means to meet housing needs.
HU (Hungary)	Homeless people are persons without any registered place of residence, except for persons whose registered places of residence are accommodation for homeless people. They include any person who spends nights in public areas or premises not designed as accommodation.
IE (Ireland)	A person is considered to be homeless if: a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, they, together with any other person who normally resides with them or who might reasonably be expected to reside with them, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of; or b) they are living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and are so living because they have no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) and they cannot provide accommodation from their own resources.
IT (Italy)	Only "roofless" and "houseless" individuals are properly considered homeless, as opposed to people living in either insecure accommodation or inadequate housing.
LT (Lithuania)	There is no official definition used in policy documents related to HHE but there is a definition used for statistical purposes. In the latter, homeless people are persons who do not own accommodation or a building or have any other right to use such accommodation or building and reside in temporary accommodation or public places.
LU (Luxemburg)	The official definition covers the entire ETHOS-Light typology (except category 4, because only people leaving institutions are considered).
LV (Latvia)	There is no official (formal) definition or typology of homelessness in Latvian legislation.
MT (Malta)	There is no official definition. The working definition of homelessness in official documents covers only persons living rough.
NL (Netherlands)	The homeless are people living rough (in the streets or in other public spaces), people who use short-term shelters and people who are non-permanently residing with family or friends and do not know where they will stay the next night.
PL (Poland)	Homeless people are persons who are not living in a dwelling as defined in the regulations on protection of tenants' rights and municipal housing and are not registered for permanent residence as defined in the regulations on population registry, or are registered for permanent residence in a dwelling in which they are unable to live.
PT (Portugal)	Homeless people are persons who, regardless of their nationality, racial or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and mental and physical

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[9] In these cases, the French term used is "*sans-abri*", i.e. "shelterless".

Countries	Definitions of homelessness
	health, are: i) roofless and living in a public space or insecure form of shelter or accommodated in an emergency shelter, or ii) without a house and living in temporary accommodation for the homeless.
RO (Romania)	Homeless people are singles or families who, due to singular or cumulative social, medical, financial, economic and/or legal reasons or due to an emergency situation: a) are living in the street or, temporarily, with friends or acquaintances; b) are unable to pay the required rent or are at risk of eviction; or c) are residing in institutions or penitentiaries, which they are expected to leave within two months, and do not have a place of residence or stable address.
SE (Sweden)	The homeless are people: a) in acute homelessness; b) in an institution and not having any housing prior to release, or in an institution even though they should have been released because they lack their own housing; c) in long-term living arrangements organised by the Social Services (e.g. the secondary housing market); or d) in private short-term living arrangements.
SI (Slovenia)	Homeless people are people: a) living rough; b) hosted in emergency accommodation (overnight shelters); c) living in accommodation for the homeless (all living situations except persons in women's shelters and refuge accommodation); d) living in institutions and due to be released with no home to go to (not always counted as homeless); e) living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (not always counted as homeless); or f) living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends due to lack of housing.
SK (Slovakia)	No official definition.
UK (United Kingdom)	The UK has two main "official" definitions of homelessness: a) street homelessness and rough sleeping[10]; and b) statutory homelessness. The latter includes most but not all ETHOS-Light categories (1, 2, 4, 5, 6)[11]. The definition of statutory homelessness in Scotland is wider than in England and there are wider definitions of local authority duties to statutory and non-statutory homeless people in Wales than in England.
AL (Albania)	The homeless include any individual or household who does not own a home or lives in an inadequate place of residence or in temporary housing and cannot afford to have a home.
BA (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	No official definition.
ME (Montenegro)	A homeless person is a person without a residential address, residing in public or other places not intended for living and without funds for the fulfilment of their housing need.
MK (North Macedonia)	No official definition. The definition used for the purposes of the statistical publication "Social Welfare for Children, Juveniles and Adults" is: Adult beneficiaries of social welfare, defined as "any physical person who makes use of rights, measures and social welfare services provided by social work centres, once or several times in the course of the reporting year"[12].
RS (Serbia)	A homeless person is a person who lives on the street, with no shelter, i.e. in a place which is not considered an apartment or another type of housing unit defined by law.
Turkey (TR)	Homelessness is not explicitly defined in official documents. The concept of "homelessness" used in official documents corresponds to the first category in the ETHOS-Light classification.
Kosovo (XK) (*)	No official definition. During the 2011 census an official definition of homelessness was adopted in the dwelling questionnaire: "residents living in inadequate housing, people sleeping rough on the streets and residents living in institutions or shelter".

(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: ESPN national reports.

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[10] The terms 'street homelessness' and 'rough sleeping' are used widely and interchangeably by government, local authorities, NGOs, and the media and public.

[11] It should be noted that people/households may be "homeless" under the first part of the statutory definition, but not meet all the criteria for help.

[12] The publication "Social Welfare for Children, Juveniles and Adults" (State Statistical Office 2018) provides annual data regarding beneficiaries of social welfare by registration status.

ESPN experts from 11 countries (of which seven are EU Member States) explicitly state that no official definition, or no definition at all, is currently being used in their respective countries. However, even among these countries there are considerable variations with regard to whether an official definition of homelessness exists, and to the potential impacts on legal and/or policy commitments towards fighting homelessness.

In Denmark, for example, although there is no "official national definition", there is however a legal obligation for municipalities to provide accommodation to certain categories of people under Article 110 of the Law on Social Services (see Table 1). According to the ESPN national expert, this is "the closest we get to an official definition of a homeless person". In practice, the ETHOS-Light definition (excluding category 5) is referred to not only by scholars and NGOS but also by public authorities.

Experts from other countries (e.g. SK, BA) explicitly report the total absence of any official/formal definitions of homelessness/ homeless persons in policy documents and/or legislation. The Slovakian expert, for example, states that "the terms 'homelessness' and 'homeless people' are not defined in the Slovak legislative system". In Bosnia and Herzegovina – the national experts argue – the Bosnia and Herzegovina entities "responsible for social policy and social protection have not adopted official definitions of homelessness, and homelessness as such is not officially monitored. This, however, does not mean that homelessness does not exist."

People sleeping rough, staying in emergency/temporary accommodation, and those living in inadequate living spaces or in places which cannot be considered "regular housing units" are the most common categories referred to in existing official definitions across Europe. The "lack of resources to provide one's own accommodation" is also referred to in several definitions of homelessness, thus highlighting the association between homelessness and lack of income.

However, although many countries lack an official and/or formal definition of homelessness, it is possible to identify the use of different categories of people in homelessness situations, either for data collection purposes or for policy purposes and/or service provision planning and delivery.

Table 2 lists the ETHOS-Light categories which are included in homelessness definitions used in each country, and those which are not[13]. For some countries, it was not easy to clearly identify the categories defined as homelessness - either due to a lack of statistical information and/or research, or due to inconsistent definitions of homelessness.

Table 2: ETHOS-Light categories currently used in homelessness definitions

	Operational categories of ETHOS-Light											
	People living rough (1)	People living in emergency accommodation (2)	People living in accommodation for the homeless (3)				People living in institutions (4)		People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (5)			People living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to a lack of housing) (6)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
AT	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BE	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
BG	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CY	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	√
CZ	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

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[13] The detailed tables provided by ESPN national experts are available in the individual country reports.

| | Operational categories of ETHOS-Light | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | People living rough (1) | People living in emergency accommodation (2) | People living in accommodation for the homeless (3) | | | | People living in institutions (4) | | People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (5) | | | People living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to a lack of housing) (6) |
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
DE	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
DK	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	X	X	√
EE	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EL	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
ES	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
FI	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
FR	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√	X
HR	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HU	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
IE	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IT	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
LT	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
LU	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√
LV	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MT	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NL	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
PL	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
PT	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RO	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	√
SE	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
SI	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	√	√	√	X
SK	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
UK	√	√	X	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
AL	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√
BA	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
ME	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	X
MK	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
RS	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	√	√
TR	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
XK	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	X	√	√	X

√ *included;* X *not included.*

For a description of these 12 living situations, please see the ETHOS-Light table in Annex A.
Please refer to individual ESPN national reports for comprehensive information about the inclusion/exclusion of specific ETHOS-Light categories and/or (slight) divergences from the ETHOS-Light definitions.
The definition used for Austria is the one used by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs for measuring homelessness on an annual basis. In Cyprus, the definition is the one used for a local initiative (see Table 1). In Denmark, it is the one used for measuring homelessness on a biannual basis. In Slovakia, there is no official definition and no reference made to ETHOS-Light categories.
Source: ESPN national reports.

One overall finding from comparing the information provided by the ESPN national experts (Table 2) is that people living rough are almost universally defined as homeless in the countries analysed, the only exception being Kosovo.

In Kosovo, there is no official definition of homelessness, and previous attempts to measure homelessness (e.g. the 2011 census) have not succeeded. The ESPN national report states that most cases of homelessness in Kosovo fit into ETHOS-Light categories 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 (internally displaced persons [IDPs], refugees, repatriated persons (mostly returned migrants from EU countries [often forced return]) and victims of domestic violence living temporarily in institutions or shelters), or 5.10 and 5.11 (people living in inadequate housing, namely in unfit housing or in extreme overcrowded conditions) [14]. Still, according to the ESPN expert, a "modest number" of people experience rooflessness in Kosovo and persons sleeping rough are mainly seen in larger urban areas.

People living in emergency accommodation (i.e. ETHOS-Light category 2) are also generally included in existing definitions and data collection on homelessness. On top of Kosovo, only five countries (BA, HR, MT, RO, TR) do not include this group. Three (HR, MT, TR) out of these five countries are those where homelessness is understood in the strictest way among the 35 countries under scrutiny, i.e. only rough sleeping is defined (formally or informally) as homelessness.

As one moves from ETHOS-Light category 3 (people living in accommodation for the homeless) towards other less specific (and less visible) categories and living situations, i.e. categories 4, 5 and 6, the number of countries defining such people as homeless progressively declines.

People living in institutions (healthcare or penal institutions) and due to be released with no home to go to are the group most often not defined as homeless. Only one non-EU country (Albania) includes in its definition people due to be released from healthcare institutions who need to stay longer than needed due to lack of housing. However, people in such situations are not explicitly referred to as homeless in the legislation, but rather as "in housing need".

People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (i.e. in mobile homes, non-conventional buildings and temporary structures [category 5]) are defined as homeless in half (category 5.11) or in less than half (categories 5.9 and 5.10) of the 35 countries covered. In six out of the seven non-EU countries included in the study (AL, BA, ME, MK, RS, XK), however, the definition of homelessness covers at least one of the living situations included in this category. In these countries, HHE often involve situations of serious housing need which affects many people living in non-conventional dwellings and structures providing very poor and inadequate living conditions. In Montenegro, for example, the current definition of a homeless person is a person without a residential address, residing in public or other places not intended for living and without the resources to meet their housing needs.

Only 14 countries include category 6, i.e. people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends, due to a lack of housing, in their homelessness definition (CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL [though not explicitly mentioned], ES, FI, LU, NL, RO, RS, SE, AL, BA). However, there is wide variance among these countries with regard to the extent to which such a "definitional inclusion" is reflected in actual measurement of the phenomenon. In Czechia, Greece, Luxembourg and Romania, no statistical information is available on this category of people, although they are defined as homeless in legal documents. In Germany, the only national data available on homelessness [15] cover, in principle, all six of the ETHOS-Light categories, but the total figures are not broken down by category. In Serbia, the official statistics available on this homelessness category – also defined as homeless – cover only the number of refugees living with families or friends. In short, out of

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[14] See Annex A for the definitions of the various categories covered by the Ethos-Light typology.

[15] Regularly provided by the Federal Association for Assistance to the Homeless (BAGW).

the 14 countries covering this more invisible – hidden –category within their definitions, only Denmark, Finland, Spain and Sweden are actually able to provide data on the number of people it includes.

1.2   Insights into the extent of homelessness in Europe

Previous research has shown the inconsistencies in methodology and in the comprehensiveness of the data collected across several EU countries (Busch-Geertsema et al. 2010, Baptista et al. 2012, Busch-Geertsema et al. 2014). Increasing challenges arise when broadening the analysis to all the EU 28 countries plus seven non-EU "ESPN countries".

The data collected for the current study by the 35 ESPN Country Teams show that in some countries there are national, regional or even city-level statistics, while in others, all that tend to be available are estimates of the level of homelessness. The availability of data also varies significantly between the ETHOS-Light categories covered.

Additionally (as shown in the previous sub-section), the data provided are based on diverse definitions of homelessness. It is, therefore, not possible to provide an overall figure on the number of homeless people in the 35 countries. Rather, we can give the existing available statistics and/or estimates in each country according to the different situations which are covered by ETHOS-Light.

Even for people living rough, defined by every ESPN country (with the exception of Kosovo) as homeless, national level data are only available in 60% of the countries covered by the study. Even these data are hardly comparable given the nature of the figures provided (e.g. regular counts, rough estimates) and who is included in the category (e.g. only people sleeping rough, versus people sleeping rough together with people living in emergency accommodation). In relation to the other categories of ETHOS-Light (Tables 3 to 6), the variability of the data provided is even more evident. Only eleven countries provide information regarding category 4 (people living in healthcare or penal institutions with no available housing solution at the exit point),

In order to attempt a comparison, a breakdown of the most recent available data into the ETHOS-Light categories was provided by ESPN national experts. Tables 3-6, organised according to those categories, present a summary of individual figures for the 35 countries[16].

Table 3: Most recent available data on ETHOS-Light categories 1 and 2

Country	People living rough	People in emergency accommodation	Reference year	Source
	Public space/external space	Overnight shelters		
AT (Austria)	13,926		2017	National inclusion indicators, BMASGK
BE (Belgium)	511	1,452	2017	Brussels capital region – Street count conducted by La Strada
	NA	764	2014	Flanders - Baseline measurement by Steunpunt Welzijns, Volksgezondheid en Gezin
BG (Bulgaria)	NA	NA	NA	NA
CY (Cyprus)	NA	NA	NA	NA
CZ (Czechia)	NA	50,638	2017	Statistical yearbook on labour and social affairs, MLSA/MPSV

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[16] The full tables provided by ESPN national experts (together with details on the data sources) are available in the individual country reports.

Country	People living rough	People in emergency accommodation	Reference year	Source
	Public space/external space	Overnight shelters		
DE (Germany)	52,000	NA	2016	BAGW (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V.)
DK (Denmark)	648	305	2017	Benjaminsen (2017) Hjemløshed i Danmark (Homelessness in Denmark)
EE (Estonia)	NA	1,546	2017	H-veeb. Hoolekandestatistika aruannete internetipõhine koondamine
EL (Greece)	691	*	2018	Pilot survey conducted in 7 urban municipalities of the country by the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity
ES (Spain)	3,149	NA	2012	Homeless Persons Survey (National Statistical Institute)
FI (Finland)	238		2018	Ara, Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus (the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland)
FR (France)	8,700	9,000	2012	INSEE-INED, mainland France survey of people using housing or meal distribution services, towns greater than 20,000 habitants
HR (Croatia)	NA	NA	NA	NA
HU (Hungary)	2,300	NA	2019	Estimation based on 3-February 2019 count survey
IE (Ireland)	156	NA	2018	Dublin Region Homeless Executive
	127**		2016	Census 2016
IT (Italy)	28,773	25,939	2014	National Survey on People Experiencing Extreme Poverty, (ISTAT)
LT (Lithuania)	NA	410	2017	Statistics Lithuania
LU (Luxembourg)	30	NA	2006	CEPS/INSTEAD, 2007
	NA	347*** 247****	2018	MFI 2018
LV (Latvia)	50	NA	2019	Welfare Department of Riga City Council (outreach team)
	NA	6,877	2017	Ministry of Welfare, Reports on social services and social assistance in the county/city municipality
MT (Malta)	6	NA	2017	Parliamentary Question No. 6885
	NA	93	2018	Personal Interview with Director Foundation Dar il-Hena and with CEO, YMCA, Malta
NL (Netherlands)	30,500		2016	CBS (2018) Insight into homelessness. A study on the homeless 2009 – 2016
PL (Poland)	2,551	4,299	2019	https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/wyniki-ogolnopolskiego-badania-liczby-osob-bezdomnych-edycja-2019
PT (Portugal)	1,443	210	2018	National Homelessness Strategy survey

Country	People living rough	People in emergency accommodation	Reference year	Source
	Public space/external space	Overnight shelters		
RO (Romania)	15,000	NA	2008-09	Samusocial Foundation and Médecins Sans Frontières survey
	NA	1,997	2017	Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, Social Assistance Statistical Bulletin
SE (Sweden)	1,647	1,229	2017	National mapping of homelessness in Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare
SI (Slovenia)	NA	1,918	2017	Smolej Jež et al. 2018
SK (Slovakia)	2,064	NA	2016	Census of homeless people in Bratislava; Ondrušová et al. 2016
	NA	7,158	2016	Report on the social situation of the population of the Slovak Republic for 2016
UK (United Kingdom)	5,711		2018, except for Scotland (2014)	Fitzpatrick et al. 2018, Fitzpatrick et al. 2015, NIHE 2018, Anon 2018
	NA	42,200	2016	Bramley 2017
AL (Albania)	NA	30	2019	Capacity of the only overnight shelter
BA (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	313	NA	2013	Bosnia and Herzegovina's Agency for Statistics, 2013 Census data
ME (Montenegro)	NA	NA	NA	NA
MK (North Macedonia)	NA	60	2018	Red Cross Skopje (2019) Annual Report for 2018
RS (Serbia)	445	NA	2011	Census 2011
TR (Turkey)	150,000	NA	2018	Estimate by the founder of an NGO, Hayata Sarıl Association (Külsoy, 2018)
XK (Kosovo)	NA	NA	NA	NA

* 954 people in sub-categories ("living situations") 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; ** these data relate to the whole country and were obtained from a national census whereas the figure of 156 pertains to Dublin only and was obtained from an explicit count on a particular night; *** total number of people who made use of two overnight shelters during 2018; **** total number of people who made use of two night stops during 2018.
NA: no data available.
Source: ESPN national reports.

Table 4: Most recent available data on ETHOS-Light category 3

Country	People living in accommodation for the homeless					Source
	Homeless hostels	Temporary accommod.	Transitional supported accommod.	Women's shelter or refuge accommod.	Reference year	
Austria	8,688			NA	2017	National inclusion indicators, BMASGK
	NA			3,284*	2018	AÖF (2019)
Belgium	4,694				2015-14	Flanders – Baseline measurement by Steunpunt Welzijns, Volksgezondheid en Gezin
Bulgaria	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cyprus	NA	NA	NA	89	2017	SPAVO Statistics 2017
Czechia	5,451**	11,741	NA	NA	2017	Statistical yearbook on labour and social affairs, MLSA/MPSV
Germany	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Denmark	2,217	165	169	NA	2017	Benjaminsen (2017) Hjemløshed i Danmark (Homelessness in Denmark)
	NA	NA	NA	1,687***	2017	Danmarks Statistik (2018)
Estonia	NA	NA	256	NA	2017	Ministry of Social Affairs (2019b). Turvakoduteenus, Lühiülevaade 2016-2017, Sotsiaalministeerium
Greece	954****			NA	2018	Pilot survey conducted in 7 urban municipalities of the country by the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity
Spain	9,915	3,537	1,239	103	2012	Homeless Persons Survey (National Statistics Institute-INE)
Finland	610			NA	2018	Ara (2019)
France	25,000	NA	NA	NA	2013	2019 Abbé-Pierre Foundation report
	NA	132,000	NA	NA	2015	
Croatia	364	NA	NA	NA	2018	Official statistics of the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy
Hungary	6,268	NA	NA	NA	2019	Estimation based on 3-February 2019 count survey
Ireland	10,305			NA	2019	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Italy	23,367			NA	2014	National Survey on People Experiencing Extreme Poverty, ISTAT
Lithuania	NA	2,494	NA	1,530	2017	Statistics Lithuania
Luxembourg	3,723			NA	2016-18	Reports of the Ministry for Family (2017, 2018) and of the Ministry for Health (2017
	NA	NA	NA	337	2014	LISER 2016
Latvia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Malta	24	NA	NA	NA	2018	Personal Interview with YMCA CEO

| Country | People living in accommodation for the homeless | | | | | Source |
	Homeless hostels	Temporary accommod.	Transitional supported accommod.	Women's shelter or refuge accommod.	Reference year	
	NA	13		NA	2018	Personal interview with Director Foundation Dar il-Hena and with CEO, YMCA, Malta
Netherlands	70,000				2017	Federatie Opvang (2018)
Poland	13,396	2,843	394	723	2019	National Homelessness Survey of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy – 2019 edition
Portugal	1,111		632	475	2018	National Homelessness Strategy survey
Romania	NA	979	NA	NA	2017	Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, Social Assistance Statistical Bulletin
Sweden	1,903	1,325	15,838	464	2017	National Board of Health and Welfare
Slovenia	104			1,197	2017	Smolej Jež et al. 2018
Slovakia	1,820	219	NA	574	2016	Administrative data on the use of social services. In: Report on the social situation of the population of the Slovak Republic for 2016
United Kingdom	97,469				2018-19	MHCLG 2018b, Scottish Government 2018, Welsh Government 2019, Northern Ireland Housing Executive 2019
Albania	NA	NA	37	NA	2019	State Social Service
	NA	NA	NA	135	2018	State Social Service
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Montenegro	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Macedonia	NA	65	NA	34	2017	State Statistical Office (2018) Social Welfare for Children, Juveniles and Adults in 2017
Serbia	NA	NA	NA	702	2018	CRM, 2018 Statistics, Collective centres for refugees and IDPs
Turkey	NA	NA	NA	3,860*****	2018	https://tr.euronews.com/2019/02/12/yerel-secimlerde-siginma-evlerindeki-kadinin-adi-yok) AFAD
Kosovo	NA	22,900	NA	156 hhds	2018	UNHCR
	NA	1,227	5,295	NA	2011-18	Ministry of Internal Affairs
	NA	NA	NA	400	2018	OSCE

* total number of women and children residing in 26 women's shelters; ** includes people in women's shelters or refuge accommodation; *** number of women using the service over one year; **** includes also people in overnight shelters; ***** total number of women residing in 144 women's shelters.

NA: no data available; hhds: households.

Source: ESPN national reports.

Table 5: Most recent available data on ETHOS Light category 4

Country	People living in institutions		Reference year	Source
	Healthcare institutions	Penal institutions		
Austria	NA	9,490	2019	Statistics on the penal system
Denmark	149	68	2017	Benjaminsen (2017) Hjemløshed i Danmark (Homelessness in Denmark)
Estonia	NA	129	2015-2018	TAT tugiteenus vanglast vabanejatele 2015-2018
Finland	0	713	2018	Ara (2019)
Luxembourg	220*	NA	2014	LISER (2016)
Netherlands	NA	8,777	2018	Infographic Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen
Poland	1,533	1,529	2019	National Homelessness Survey of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy – 2019 edition
Portugal	190	620	2018	National Homelessness Strategy
Sweden	4,194	705	2017	NBHW (2017)
Slovakia	29	NA	2016	Census of homeless people in Bratislava; Ondrušová et al. 2016
Albania	670	NA	2019	State Social Service
	NA	5,280	2019	National prison administration

*NA: no data available. * includes only people leaving institutions.*
Source: ESPN national reports.

Table 6: Most recent available data on ETHOS-Light categories 5 and 6

Country	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing			With family and friends*	Reference year	Source
	Mobile homes	Non-conventional building	Temporary structures	Not the usual place of residence**		
Czechia	925	16,834	32,408	NA	2011	Census 2011
Denmark	NA	NA	NA	2,177	2017	Benjaminsen (2017) Hjemløshed i Danmark (Homelessness in Denmark)
Greece	NA	42,942	NA	NA	2011	ELSTAT, 2011 Population-Housing Census
	73,152 Roma people			NA	2017	Special Secretariat for the Social Integration of Roma (2018)
Spain	NA			1,738	2012	Homeless Persons Survey (National Statistics Institute-INE)
Finland	NA			2,326	2018	Ara (2019)
France	91,000			NA	2014	2019 Abbé-Pierre Foundation report
	NA	NA	NA	436,900	2013	ONPES report 2016-2017

Country	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing			With family and friends*	Reference year	Source
	Mobile homes	Non-conventional building	Temporary structures	Not the usual place of residence**		
Hungary	95,251			NA	2016	Central Statistical Office 2018
Italy	16,217		NA	NA	2014	National Survey on People Experiencing Extreme Poverty, ISTAT
Poland	NA	3,456	NA	NA	2019	National Homelessness Survey of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy – 2019 edition
Portugal	4,549			3,701	2018	National Homelessness Strategy
Romania	165,000			NA	2011	NIS, Romania: National Census of the Population and Housing stock
Sweden	343			4,364	2017	NBHW (2017)
United Kingdom	88,000		NA	NA	2018	Wilson 2018
	NA		8,900	68,300 hhds	2016	Bramley 2017
Albania	NA	3,882 hhds	NA	NA	2011	INSTAT; Census 2011
North Macedonia	NA	NA	85	NA	2018	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Serbia	NA	17,842		NA	2011	Census 2011, RSO 2014
	NA	NA		8,750	Census 2011	RSO, 2015, Two decades of refugees in Serbia
Kosovo	NA	12,210***	NA	NA	2019	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
	NA	NA	54 hhds	NA	2018	UNHCR

Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing).
**Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence.*
***Incomplete data from 22 municipalities.*
NA: no data available; hhds: households.
Source: ESPN national reports.

1.3   Profiling homelessness: the characteristics of homeless people

The available data on the characteristics of homeless populations for the 35 countries covered by the study reveal, once again, the existence of considerable variations with regard to the definitions used by each country and to the nature of the data collection from which such characteristics have been obtained.

The following sub-sections summarise the evidence provided by ESPN national experts, on the basis of the available data, which are often not directly comparable.

1.3.1   The gendered nature of homelessness in Europe

Emerging debates about the role of gender in homelessness and housing (Doherty 2001; Baptista 2010; Mayock and Bretherton 2016; Pleace 2016; Bretherton 2017) have been fuelled by growing evidence that experience of homelessness is differentiated by gender. The use of definitions and/or data collection frameworks which tend to exclude important dimensions of women's homelessness (e.g. hidden homelessness, family homelessness, concealed forms of rough sleeping) have been noted elsewhere (Busch-Geertsema et al. 2014, Pleace 2016) and seem to be confirmed by the analysis of the profile data provided by several ESPN national experts.

Overall, the gender distribution of homeless people shows that in most countries **the majority of homeless people are males** (often making up above 75% of the total homeless people counted).

Women usually represent a minority among the homeless population surveyed, rarely accounting for more than 20-30% of the total. Among the countries covered by this ESPN study, the lowest percentage was around 20% (HR, LT, LV) and the highest was 52% in Luxembourg. In the former case, the figures relate to people sleeping rough (HR), and people living in shelters, night shelters or short-term shelters (LT, LV). In Luxembourg, the expert notes, this "overrepresentation" of women is reported in relation to ETHOS-Light category 3 (homeless hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional supported accommodation and women's shelters), thus excluding rough sleeping and emergency accommodation. In fact, women only account for 28% of emergency shelter users surveyed in 2014.

According to the available data, women are more often recorded in the homeless populations of Austria, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK:

- In Austria, in 2012, although men accounted for the majority of the registered homeless population, there was a considerable difference between those people recorded rough sleeping (23% women) and people registered in institutions for the homeless (31% women). The ESPN expert notes that existing research in Austria confirms that women more often try to avoid situations of rooflessness by resorting to precarious housing "alternatives" or by moving in with friends.

- According to the 2012 INSEE homelessness survey in France, women accounted for 38% of total homeless adults, in different types of living situations (e.g. rough sleeping, staying in emergency accommodation, living in sheltered housing, living in hotels).

- In Ireland, the most recent homelessness count (week of March 25-31, 2019) recorded a total of 6,484 adults and 3,821 children (58% of homeless adult men and 42% women); this amounted to 1,733 families, of which 59% are single parents with children.

- Luxembourg: see previous paragraph.

- According to the 2017 national survey in Sweden, 38% of the homeless population (covering categories 1 to 6 of ETHOS-Light) were women; additionally, almost half of the

homeless people included in the 2017 survey lived in different types of long-term housing organised by the Social Services.

- In Scotland, in 2017-18, among applicants to the statutory system 55% were male and 45% women; in England, in 2017-18, of those accepted as homeless and owed a main duty, 64% of households were families with children.

In Germany, 2017 data from North Rhine-Westphalia (regarding homeless people housed by the municipalities in accordance with their statutory obligations) recorded a total of 69.7% homeless men and 30.3% homeless women.

In two non-EU countries covered by the ESPN, the presence of women (although in a minority among the homeless population) is also noted as higher than usual among people living rough, in primary homelessness and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2013, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women accounted for 35% of all people living rough, and a significant number of IDPs living in collective centres were single-parent families (often female-headed families). In Serbia, 2014 data on primary homelessness showed that men accounted for the majority of the population (65.1%) and women represented 34.9%. Internally displaced Roma population groups from Kosovo living in Serbia are made up of an almost equal share of women and men (49.1% and 50.2% respectively).

In short, **women are present in larger proportions** whenever the definitions and the enumeration methods used encompass a wider reality than rough sleeping and the use of emergency accommodation services.

In fact, among rough sleeping populations or among people using shelters and night shelters, homeless men usually account for more than three in every four individuals. For instance:

- In 2018, in the Brussels Capital Region, among the nearly 300 people sleeping rough, 84% were men, although there is evidence of an increase in the number of women between 2017 and 2018.

- In 2016, in Czechia, the largest share of homeless men was recorded among the rough sleeping population (75%[17]) and in overnight shelters (83%[18]).

- The ESPN Danish national expert reports a strong gender imbalance in the composition of homelessness (covering all ETHOS-Light categories, except women in refuges and people living in non-conventional dwellings) in his country in 2017: three out of four homeless people were men.

- In Estonia, in 2015, about 87% of the homeless persons using the homeless night shelters were men.

- Between March 2015 and March 2016, the "Municipality of Athens Reception and Solidarity Centre for the Homeless" recorded a total of 451 homeless people living in the streets of the city, of whom 85% were men.

- In the Netherlands, data for the year 2016 (covering people sleeping rough, people using short-term shelters and people who are non-permanently residing with family or friends and do not know where they will stay the next night) recorded an 84% share of homeless men.

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[17] Estimates coming from different localities and different years (2007-14).

[18] 2014 data.

- In Poland, men accounted for 84% of the total homeless population recorded in 2019 through the biannual one-night censuses of homeless people staying in emergency accommodation, institutions and inhabitable spaces.

- In 2017, 86% of rough sleepers in England were men, but the ESPN expert notes that women rough sleepers are undercounted.

The underrepresentation of women is also often linked to the paucity of data and research on family homelessness compared to data on single homelessness among men (Bretherton 2017, Baptista et al. 2017). In fact, few ESPN national reports contain any information on family homelessness. The main evidence reported by ESPN experts is as follows:

- In Czechia, there are more women in refuges and halfway houses, and according to the available data, in 2017, more than half of the women living in refuges live there with their children (single-parent families). No further information is available on these families.

- In Denmark (where most homeless people are single), in 2017, one in six homeless women were mothers caring for their children on a daily basis, compared to only one in 100 of the homeless men.

- In England, in 2017-18, of those accepted as statutory homeless, 64% of households were families with children, whereas in Northern Ireland, 32% of those accepted were families with children.

- In Finland, according to 2018 data, single parents are strongly over-represented among homeless families (77.4%), and immigrant families make up 39% of all homeless families.

- In Ireland, in recent years, the continued growth in family homelessness and increasing female homelessness are changing the profile of homelessness in the country. The most recent official count of homelessness on the week of 25-31 March 2019, recorded a total of 1,733 families, of whom 59% were single parents with children. Migrant families are also strongly present among families entering into homelessness; the telephone survey carried out by Focus Ireland in 2016 found that between 35% and 59% of homeless families were of migrant origin.

- The Portuguese national expert reports a lack of official information with regard to homeless families, arguing that support organisations identify different types of vulnerable situations, e.g. lone-parent families, families with mental health or addiction problems, women with children affected by domestic violence and migrant families with children who have lost specific health-related support.

- In Romania, according to NGOs, there are a growing number of families living on the streets, representing the fastest growing sector of the homeless population.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a 2009-10 study found a total of 1,526 homeless families in the country (not including those eligible for housing reconstruction assistance under the return programme), living in collective centres, in temporary dwellings about to be demolished, in improvised accommodation and living rough.

- In Serbia, large multi-generational families (7.1 family members on average) are common among the internally displaced Roma population from Kosovo.

- The Cypriot expert reports the recent records of families threatened with eviction or those who have been evicted and are forced into temporary homelessness, resulting, in a few

extreme cases, in families having to sleep in cars or in other inappropriate places. However, only anecdotal evidence exists and there is no further information on the number or characteristics of such families.

1.3.2 Age distribution and trends over time

The age profile of the homeless population presents some important variations across countries, although it is again difficult to compare the data, given the use of different criteria for the presentation of the homeless population age profile.

In general, in most countries the age distribution of the homeless population seems to be more concentrated among the **active age adult population**. Such is the case in, for example: Austria (homeless people registered in institutions), Belgium (people sleeping rough in the Brussels Capital Region), Bulgaria (Sofia city count), Cyprus (2019 data from Limassol municipality), the Region of North Rhine–Westphalia (over half of the population housed by the municipalities in accordance with their statutory obligations on June 30 2017 were aged between 30 and 64 years old), Estonia (homeless shelter service users recorded in 2015), Greece (people sleeping rough in Athens in 2015–2016), Spain (in 2012, homeless persons had an average age of 42.7), Italy (half of the homeless population were aged between 35 and 54 according to the 2014 national homelessness survey), Luxembourg (in 2018, the users of the two emergency shelters were predominantly aged between 31 and 50 years old), Portugal (national surveys and NGO data confirm the predominance of homeless people aged between 30 and 59 years old).

However, a significant group of countries (AT, DE, DK, FI, IE, IT, MT, NL, RO, SI; and also, outside the EU: MK) report a strong presence of **young people between 15 and 29 years old**, or an increasing share of this age group among homeless people:

- In Austria, in October 2012, 40% of all people registered as roofless were young people aged between 15 and 29 years old. Yet the share of younger people among the persons registered in institutions for the homeless was significantly lower (20%) on the same date.

- In the Region of North Rhine–Westphalia (DE), the proportion of young adults (between 19 and 29 years old) increased significantly between 2016 and 2017 (from 8.3% to 27.9%).

- Denmark, the ESPN national expert notes, is the Nordic country with the biggest share of new young homeless: in 2017, more than one-third of the homeless population were aged 18-29.

- In Finland, the expert reports the presence of about one fifth of people younger than 25 years old among single homeless people in 2018.

- The Irish expert notes that – according to 2019 data – the greatest concentration of homeless people is among those aged between 25 and 44 years old (59%), but the numbers of those aged between 18 and 24 years have increased rather rapidly.

- In Italy, a 2018 report from Caritas highlights that the number of young homeless people is increasing: in 2017, one third of the homeless population was aged 18-34 years old. In most cases, these young homeless are foreigners (only 1 out of ten is a national).

- In Malta, in 2018, the YMCA clients' profile – including homeless people, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers – reveals a high proportion of young adults between 25 and 39 years old (43.4%) and young people between 18 and 24 years old (21.1%).

- The Dutch expert reports an increasing proportion of young people aged less than 30 years old between 2009 and 2016 (from 17% to 24%).

- In Bucharest, NGOs note that street children are slowly being replaced by young adults "who grew up on the streets". The 2014 survey conducted by *Save the Children* Romania, in 2014, found that 42% of the homeless children and young people aged below 35 years old had been living in the streets for more than 10 years.

- The Slovenian expert reports that in recent years, there has been an upward trend in younger homeless people.

- In North Macedonia, the 2017 data published by the National Statistical Office revealed that 35% of all homeless people were aged between 22 and 25 years old.

In Hungary, where the age structure of the homeless population is older, the ESPN national experts highlight the serious condition of young people among the most vulnerable sectors of the homeless population: "one fifth of homeless people practically starve, especially the younger ones".

The situation of **homeless children** is specifically mentioned by several ESPN national experts. For instance:

- In 2014, in Flanders (BE) approximately 1,800 children lived in homelessness services, including night shelters and transit housing, and 25% of eviction procedures involved children.

- The Latvian expert reports that there has been a significant decrease in the users of shelter or night shelter services.

- In Ireland, at the last count in March 2019, there were 3,821 children counted as homeless (some 38% of the total homeless population).

- The Romanian expert reports extensively about the situation of street children and young people under 30 years old (who are former street children), particularly in Bucharest, either living permanently or temporarily on the streets. Gender differences are found among these two groups: in 2014, 65% of those living permanently on the streets were male while 54% of those living temporarily on the streets are female.

- The Slovenian expert notes that homelessness is no longer confined to "middle-aged men", but has clearly spread towards women and children.

- In Slovakia, children aged under 15 years old are over-represented among persons living in long-term, transitional shelters or similar arrangements, as recorded by the 2011 Population and Housing Census. Additionally, the 2016 Bratislava census of homeless people found a total of 284 children among the homeless population, most of whom were living in various types of accommodation, with only a few living rough.

- In England, in 2017-18, 64% of those accepted as statutory homeless were families with children, and in Northern Ireland families with children made up 32% of those accepted.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2013, children and youngsters (age groups 0 to 19) accounted for 17.3% of the total rough sleeping population.

- In North Macedonia, street children are also a significant issue. Roma children make up around 95% of all street children in the country. According to 2015 data collected by the national Ombudsman's office, almost half of the street children assisted (233) were living in the capital city: most of them were living with their parents, 47% were girls, only 13% attended formal education and the majority were involved in begging.

- In Turkey, the number of street children is estimated to be around 40,000, and similarly to the situation in North Macedonia, most of these children are living with their parents.

Although this overview does not provide evidence on the impact of homelessness on children, previous studies (e.g. Halpenny et al. 2002, Pleace et al. 2008, Kinderrechtencommissariat 2016) have highlighted serious negative consequences for the well-being of children living in homelessness situations: lack of privacy, stability and security; bumpy and interrupted school trajectories; a sense of powerlessness regarding decisions affecting their lives; lack of space to play; and stigmatisation. In line with these findings, the Romanian expert notes that "the longer families live in the streets the harder for these to regain stability and to overcome the long-lasting effects on children in regard to education and health".

Finally, ESPN experts from a smaller number of countries (EE, HU, LV, PL, SE) report the presence of an **older cohort of homeless population** (mostly within the older active years), as either a stable or an emerging phenomenon. The Estonian expert indicates that persons aged 50-64 years old seem to be a particularly vulnerable group, since homeless people within this age group make up 45% of the total homeless users of the shelter services. In Hungary, an analysis of the 3-February count data (1999-2018) reveals a shift in the age structure of the homeless population towards older generations (in 2018, people aged 50 years or older made up 67% of the total homeless population). In Riga (Latvia), people aged 51 to 61 years old make up the largest segment of shelter service users. In Poland, in 2019, one in every three homeless people recorded by the biannual one-night census was aged over 60 years old, and 46% were aged between 41 and 60 years old. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare noted an increase (roughly 300 individuals more) in the number of people aged 65 years or older between the 2011 and 2017 national surveys.

1.3.3   Education, work and income

Some data on the level of education of homeless people are available for a limited number of countries (e.g. BA, BG, ES, HR, HU, NL, PL, SI, RS).

Low levels of education – mostly primary and secondary education – were characteristic of the homeless population, as reported by most ESPN experts. In Poland, only a small share (3%) of the homeless population was recorded as not having completed any educational level, whereas the same was true of one fifth of homeless people recorded as primary homeless in 2014. The Hungarian experts report a worsening of the highest level of school attainment among the homeless population over the last two decades.

The BA experts report a rather unusual pattern of school attainment: more than half (53%) of homeless people recorded as rough sleeping in 2013 had completed secondary education or more.

Data on work and income among homeless people are limited for most of the countries under analysis. However, the situations reported by ESPN experts confirm existing widespread evidence of the association between **homelessness, unemployment and very low incomes**, although other variables (e.g. complex support needs) may also affect these relationships. It is also important to note that the role of social welfare benefits – particularly minimum income schemes or other means-tested benefits – is considered residual and/or inadequate by several national ESPN experts (e.g. EL, IT, PT).

Unemployment was explicitly mentioned as a cause of homelessness by the Greek expert, where one in every four homeless people reported that they had an income which was not related to work but rather to the receipt of social welfare benefits. In Portugal, the minimum income scheme has been identified as one of the major sources of income among the homeless population. In France, more than three in every four homeless adults surveyed in 2012 were either unemployed or inactive. Likewise, in Serbia, according to 2014 data, three in every four homeless people were registered as unemployed or "occupation unknown". In Hungary, between 1999 and 2018, the

proportion of the homeless population who work regularly has fallen steeply and, at the same time, the share of those unable to work doubled during this period; additionally, based on the average of the last few years' 3 February counts, half of the homeless population do not have any regular income, one in every four homeless persons has mental health problems and one in every two has serious ill health. The lack of a job is also mentioned by most homeless people surveyed in Italy in 2014: more than one in every four people declare that they do some kind of work from which they receive some income; 17% declare that they earn no income at all and only one out of ten that they receive social benefits.

1.3.4   Ethnicity and migration background

Evidence provided by ESPN experts in the 35 European countries covered by this study confirms that **experience of homelessness may be linked to ethnicity and to migrant status**. Notwithstanding, in more than half of the countries (e.g. BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK, ME), a majority of homeless people are nationals or belong to the national majority population, although in some of them there are reports of overrepresentation of some ethnic minority populations and/or of recent rising trends (e.g. DE, DK, FI, NL, SE):

- In Denmark, in 2017, one in five homeless people are immigrants or descendants of immigrants (from a non-ethnic Danish background) compared to less than 14% in the total population; in the same year, 88% of migrants living rough (rough sleeping and in overnight shelters), coming primarily from Central and Eastern European countries, were staying in Copenhagen.

- 2018 data from the national homelessness survey in Finland reveal that a quarter of all single homeless people have an immigrant background and that immigrant families are also overrepresented among homeless single-parent families. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of homeless immigrants rose from 250 people to 1,700.

- In Germany, in the Region of North Rhine-Westphalia, the share of non-German nationals among the homeless population counted in June 2017 had risen considerably since the last count in 2016 (from 28.3% to 37%).

- People with a non-western foreign background are heavily overrepresented among the homeless population in the Netherlands (48%), a situation which has become more pronounced over the years.

- In 2017, 57% of the homeless population recorded in Sweden were nationals and 43% had a migrant background. Compared to the previous count (2011), the number of persons with a migration background doubled (Knutagård 2018).

By contrast, in several countries the available data show that the immigrant population and/or population from ethnic minority groups make up a majority among homeless people or, at least, among some sectors of the homeless population (e.g. people sleeping rough). For instance:

- In Austria, more than 50% of people registered as roofless in 2012 were born outside Austria. The expert notes that this strong representation of people born in other European countries or in non-European countries strongly reflects the existing rules governing access to institutions for homeless people, i.e. getting a place here usually requires Austrian citizenship, or, in the case of EU-citizenship, long-term legal residency in Austria.

- Among the nearly 300 people sleeping rough in the Brussels Capital Region, interviewed in 2018, only one in every five people was Belgian, and one in four declared themselves to be an asylum seeker.

- In France, data from 2012 also confirm a stronger representation of people born outside France among the homeless population: 56% of adults were born outside France, with 60% of these coming from an African country, and one-third from Eastern Europe. Homeless people born abroad were more likely to be accompanied by children.

- In Italy, 58% of the homeless people recorded in the 2014 ISTAT survey were non-nationals.

- In Luxembourg, the 2018 report of the Ministry for Family mentions 26% Luxembourg nationals, 40% EU nationals and 34% non-EU nationals.

In the majority of the seven non-EU countries included in the ESPN, the situation of specific ethnic or migrant groups of people who are living in extremely precarious housing conditions was strongly highlighted (see previous sub-sections). Some of these groups and/or communities include Roma and Egyptian communities living in Albania in extremely deprived housing conditions; internally displaced people living in non-conventional highly degraded collective accommodation in Kosovo, and returned Kosovar migrants who are homeless because they sold their house prior to emigrating to the EU; Roma children living on the streets of the capital city of North Macedonia (reported above); Roma from Albania and North Macedonia living rough in larger urban areas in Kosovo. In Turkey, around 175,000 refugees (from Syria) are living in temporary refugee camps and more than 3 million refugees (mainly from Syria but also from other countries) are currently scattered around the country, some of whom may be living on the streets or in different forms of temporary accommodation.

1.3.5   Health conditions and the homelessness experience

Physical health problems, severe mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction are some of the support needs identified among homeless people by ESPN experts in some Member States (e.g. AT, CZ, CY, DK, HR, EL, FI, IT, PT, LV, NL, SE, SK). Previous research has shown that maintaining good health is much more challenging for those experiencing HHE. The extent to which health-related problems are also more prevalent among homeless populations in other countries but have not been reported may be due to a lack of more extensive data or to the dominant pattern of existing homelessness support services.

The presence of long-term homelessness in Denmark (in 2017, one in four people had been homeless for more than two years) and of a higher share of mentally ill homeless people, especially compared with other Nordic countries, is explicitly mentioned by the ESPN national expert, based on extensive research and statistical data available in the country. Moreover, the nature of homelessness service provision (see Section 3), based on high intensity housing-focused support services, may make it easier to identify and respond to more complex support needs. However, the significant continuous inflow of "new" homeless people recorded in Denmark is also illustrated by the fact that, in 2017, one in five people had been homeless for less than three months. In Finland, national statistics show that about one quarter of all homeless people (mostly men) suffer from long-term homelessness, and that alcoholism and drug abuse are among the main drivers of homelessness within this group. In a third Nordic country – Sweden –, the expert reports that, in 2017, over two-thirds of the homeless population had been homeless for one year or more, and that more than 3,000 homeless individuals (10%) had experienced homelessness for ten or more years.

The Austrian expert refers to a 2012 evaluation study on the "homeless assistance schemes" of the city of Vienna, which provides detailed information on the health condition of homeless clients: 57% of the clients reported physical health issues, 39% mental and emotional problems, 20% problems with the consumption of alcohol and other drugs, and 6% other addictive behaviour.

Another Austrian study showed that significant excess mortality was observed for homeless people. The mortality risk of male homeless people is four times as high as in the general male population and, overall, homelessness appears to shorten life expectancy by approximately 20 years.

Self-reported high levels of chronic illness (almost one in every three homeless people) were identified in Spain, where there is also evidence of increased periods of homelessness, particularly among people from a foreign background. Italy reports a similar pattern of increased "chronicity" of homelessness: 2014 data show that – compared to 2011 – the percentage of people who have been homeless for more than two years increased from 27.4% to 41.1%, and the percentage of those living in homelessness for more than four years rose from 16% to 21.4%. This growth, the expert notes, is mainly due to an increase in the average duration of homelessness among foreigners.

The Hungarian experts report that the proportion of chronically ill long-term homeless people has grown steeply within the homeless population between 1999 and 2018, and that homeless people are experiencing high levels of chronic illnesses and psychiatric problems: in 2018, one in every four homeless persons had mental health problems, half of them reported serious ill health, and one in every five homeless persons had an addiction issue.

In short, the evidence provided by the ESPN countries seems to corroborate previous findings that the experience of HHE increases health risks, and results in higher morbidity and mortality.

1.4   Rising homelessness trends across Europe: unveiling the main drivers

This sub-section presents the main findings regarding the principal homelessness trends identified over the last ten years. It also performs a comparative analysis of the assessments made by ESPN national experts of the main drivers explaining these overall – largely rising – trends in the majority of EU Member States. The situation in non-EU countries will be discussed separately, given the availability of data and the nature of the issues raised.

The information provided in the individual country reports varies greatly with regard to the quality of the data available at national level. Thus, in countries with more robust data (e.g. DK, FI, IE, UK) it is not only possible to document and accurately identify overall trends over the last ten years, but it is also possible to identify different drivers for different population sectors. Some countries identify trends using statistics and data collection exercises which may be more or less comparable over time; in others, trends are identified using evidence from specific areas or services and/or homelessness service providers' assessments of the country situation. In the latter cases, it is important to note that upward trends based on figures provided by service user registers may also reflect improved service provision and an increased take-up of services. Such combined effects cannot be disentangled given the lack of appropriate data and analysis.

1.4.1   Homelessness on the increase in Europe

Broadly speaking, ESPN experts in 24 out of the 28 EU countries report that **homelessness has increased over the last decade**. This finding is clearly in line with one of the conclusions of the 2017 Second Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe prepared by the Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA[19]. Their report already pointed to this upward trend – observed over both the short and long term – across almost all Member States, and warned of the human consequences of increasing poverty and marginalisation. Although specifically exploring the state of access to emergency accommodation in Europe, the latest report by the Abbé Pierre Foundation and

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[19] Available at https://www.feantsa.org/download/gb_housing-exclusion-report_complete_20178613899107250251219.pdf
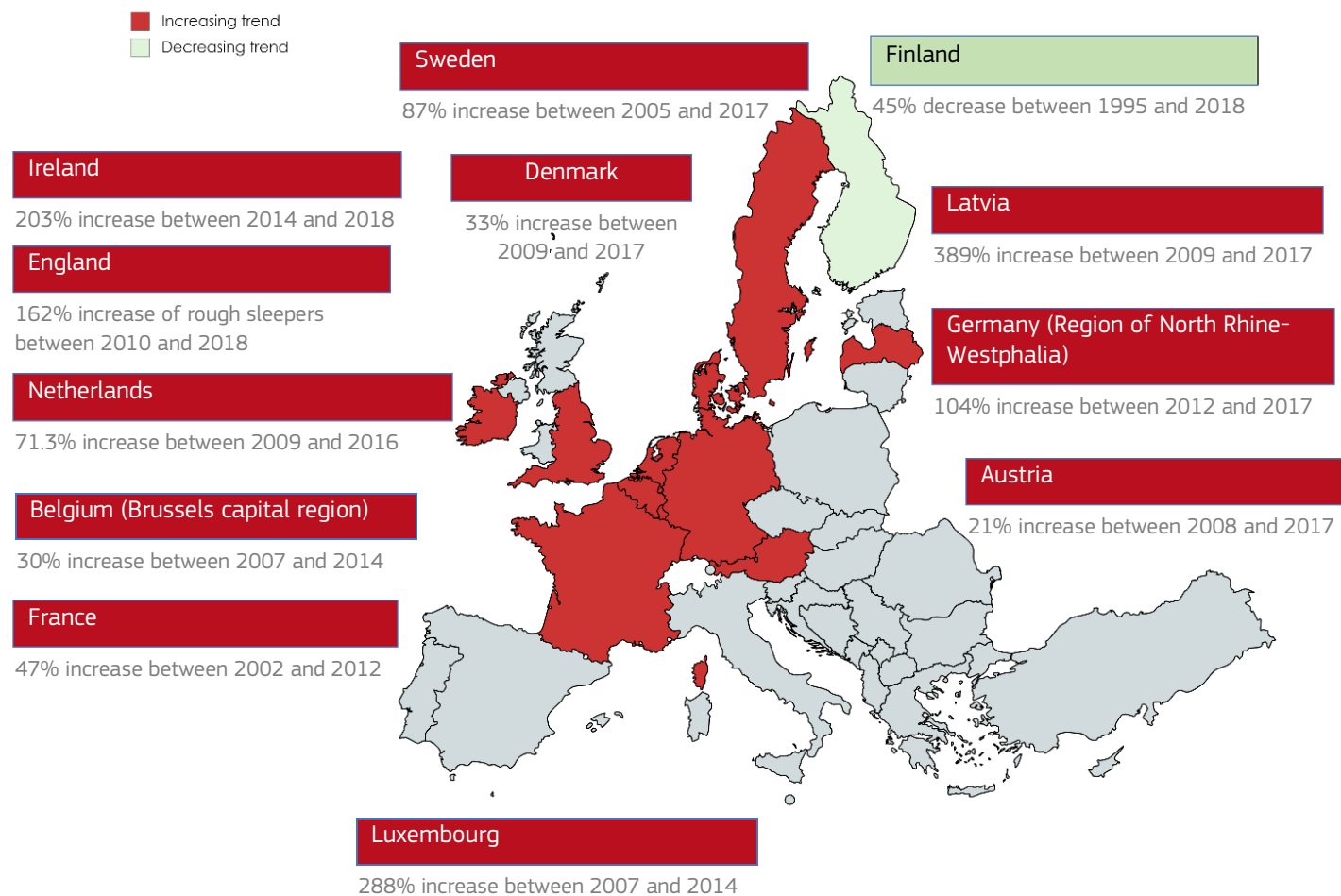
FEANTSA[20] restates previous concerns regarding the rise of homelessness in Europe and its "enormous human and social costs".

In Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK (England in particular), experts report substantial rises (increases of between 16% and 389%) in the number of homeless people over the last decade, based on existing statistics. Finland is the only EU Member State reporting a significant reduction in homelessness over the last two to three decades (see Figure 1):

- In Austria, the number of homeless people increased by 21% between 2008 and 2017, according to Statistics Austria. In 2017, 21,567 people were recorded as homeless: 13,926 people recorded as roofless, and 8,688 were living in institutions for the homeless (the sum of these figures is not 21,567, since the total is adjusted for double counting).

- In Belgium, in spite of the lack of overall national figures, measurements conducted by various organisations in different parts of the country show that HHE are on the rise, in particular in the Brussels Capital Region, where the number of homeless people has almost doubled in less than 10 years. The 30% increase between the 2014 and the 2017 count (from 2,603 to 3,386 homeless persons) is mainly due to a sharp increase in the number of people actually living on the streets.

- In Denmark, where comparable and robust national data have made it possible to measure homelessness since 2009, the number of homeless people increased from a total of 4,998 to 6,635 persons between 2009 and 2017, i.e. an increase of 32.8%. The biggest increase regards persons living temporarily with family and friends, the number of whom doubled. There is also a marked increase in the number of homeless people staying in hotels, although starting from a much lower level, i.e. from 88 to 165 persons.

- In France, the most recent available data only make it possible to compare the trend in homelessness between 2002 and 2012, based on INSEE surveys focusing on towns with over 20,000 inhabitants. The figures show an overall increase of 47% in the number of homeless people over this decade. In 2012, there were 112,300 homeless people including 82,200 adults and 30,100 children. Between the two surveys, the proportion of women, of people aged 60 or more, of couples with children, and of people with a higher education diploma went up. But the highest rise (+207%) was registered among non-francophone homeless adults.

- The German national expert reports an increase of 64.8% in the extent of homelessness between 2006 and 2016, based on estimates provided by the Federal Association for Assistance to the Homeless (BAGW). According to BAGW, the total number of homeless people (excluding refugees) was around 860,000 in 2016. In the Region of North Rhine-Westphalia – where annual statistics on emergency housing[21] are published – the number of homeless persons surveyed rose between 2012 and 2017 from 15,826 to 32,286, i.e. an increase of 104%.

- The Irish situation reveals increasing annual trends based on official counts. In the four years between mid-July 2014 and mid-July 2018, for example, the total counted numbers rose from 3,258 to 9,872. The numbers of children rose much more rapidly than those for adults. The ESPN national expert argues that this – together with a trend of increasing female homelessness – is changing the profile of homelessness in Ireland.

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[20] Available at https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Activities/events/OHEEU_2019_ENG_Web.pdf.

[21] The findings concentrate on one element of housing emergencies: persons or households affected by homelessness. The data are based on reports compiled by the municipalities and charitable providers of homeless support.

Figure 1: Countries with substantial variations in homelessness over the last decades

Increasing trend
Decreasing trend

Sweden
87% increase between 2005 and 2017

Finland
45% decrease between 1995 and 2018

Ireland
203% increase between 2014 and 2018

Denmark
33% increase between 2009 and 2017

Latvia
389% increase between 2009 and 2017

England
162% increase of rough sleepers between 2010 and 2018

Germany (Region of North Rhine-Westphalia)
104% increase between 2012 and 2017

Netherlands
71.3% increase between 2009 and 2016

Belgium (Brussels capital region)
30% increase between 2007 and 2014

Austria
21% increase between 2008 and 2017

France
47% increase between 2002 and 2012

Luxembourg
288% increase between 2007 and 2014

Source: ESPN national reports.

- In Latvia, administrative data from the Ministry of Welfare on the number of clients using shelters/night shelters show a significant increase (+389%) in the number of homeless people who have used these services, between the beginning of 2009 and the end of 2017 (from 1,766 to 6,877 people).

- In Luxembourg, HHE almost tripled between 2007 and 2014. In 2007, a survey carried out by CEPS/INSTEAD counted 715 homeless people. Seven years later, the 2014 count based on a survey conducted by LISER was 2,059.

- The Dutch national expert reports a 71.3% rise in homelessness between 2009 and 2016 (from 17,800 to 30,500 people), based on a 2018 report produced by Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

- In Sweden, homelessness figures rose from 17,834 individuals in 2005 to 33,269 in 2017, i.e. a rise of 86.5% in about one decade[22]. The 2017 survey also reveals an increase in the number of acute homelessness, i.e. ETHOS-Light categories 1, 2, 3 and 5, and a large increase in the number of people in long-term housing solutions. Over the decade the profile of homelessness has been changing.

- Trends in homelessness in the UK over the last ten years show a sharp increase in all types of homelessness, almost entirely due to increases in England. According to the UK national expert, the increase in England over the 2010s contrasts with the fall in England over the 2000s, and with a fall in Scotland in the 2010s. Estimates of the number of rough sleepers in England increased by 162% between 2010 and 2018, from 1,768 to 4,677. In England, acceptances of households being assessed as statutory homeless increased by 43% between 2009-10 and 2017-18, from 40,000 to 57,000 households.

In several EU Member States there is also strong evidence of increasing trends in homelessness, although based on less systematic and comparable data:

- In Bulgaria and Slovakia, in spite of data comparability issues, both experts report increases in homelessness in recent years, based on evidence provided by homelessness support organisations. In Bulgaria, managers of crisis centres and shelters report that the number of homeless people increases every year. In Slovakia, providers also report increases between 2013 and 2016, both in the number of persons using night shelters (an increase of almost 50%), and in the number of homeless people using homeless hostels (up by 21%), and halfway houses (up by 16%). On the other hand, the use of emergency housing facilities decreased by 34% in the same period.

- The Estonian expert reports an increase in the number of people using shelter services, because they lack a place of residence, between 2009 and 2015 (from 865 to 1,093 people). Until 2016, in addition to these shelter services, there was also a homeless night shelter service. The number of persons using the homeless night shelters increased between 2009 and 2015, from 1,092 to 1,508 people.

- In Greece, the experts note, since the outbreak of the prolonged economic crisis, and especially with the persistence of the crisis and the worsening social situation, the number of homeless people and people at risk of housing exclusion seems to have continued to grow. Yet reliable official data, at both national and regional level, were (and are still) not available.

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[22] The magnitude of the rise reported should be interpreted cautiously, since Sweden has conducted five national homelessness surveys (1993, 1999, 2005, 2011 and 2017), and changes in the definition every time a survey has been conducted make it more difficult to compare the figures.

- In Spain, there is evidence of an increase in the number of homeless people over the last decade, based on different sources of information. The 2005 and 2012 surveys carried out by the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE) reveal a 4.7% increase in the number of homeless persons in Spain (from 21,900 to 22,938 people); the national homelessness strategy (ENI-PSH 2015-2020) estimates a total of 33,000 in 2014, and Caritas estimates point to a total of 40,000 people in 2018.

- In Malta, the expert reports an increasing trend in homelessness situations within an overall context of low levels of homelessness. This increase has been described by the main Maltese homelessness service providers (Caritas Malta and YMCA), who contest figures recently presented in Parliament referring to the number of cases living rough as reported to the police. According to these figures, between 2013 and 2018 a total of 27 persons were found sleeping rough. These data exclude people hosted at shelters and using other services, as well as people living on beaches, in cars, or squatting in abandoned buildings. The YMCA, for example, claims that a total of 191 homelessness cases were referred to their services between January and June 2019.

In Croatia, Poland and Portugal the existing evidence on homelessness points to either **mixed patterns** (Croatia and Poland) or a **stabilisation** (Portugal) of homelessness over the years:

- In Croatia, where no accurate data are available, the official data show a reduction from 493 persons staying in shelters and overnight shelters in December 2017 to 364 persons in December 2018. However, this "decrease" might be linked to the impact of a legal provision, according to which homeless people staying in shelters are not entitled to social assistance, i.e. leaving the shelter is the only option to receive such support. The Croatian Homelessness Network estimates a total of 2,000 people sleeping rough, arguing that homelessness has increased over the last decade, particularly as a consequence of a severe economic crisis.

- Poland has carried out biannual one-night censuses of homeless people staying in emergency accommodation, institutions and inhabitable spaces since 2011. Although the figures across this period are not fully comparable, between 2011 and 2015 the number of homeless people increased substantially (by 40%), and then dropped by 16% from 2015 to 2019. In 2019, a total of 30,330 homeless people was recorded.

- The Portuguese expert reports an overall stabilisation of homelessness over the last ten years, based on existing available data which do not allow a consistent analysis over time. The latest national survey carried out in mainland Portugal in 2018 identified a total of 922 people sleeping rough and 1,088 people living in shelters for the homeless.

Finland is the only EU Member State which has managed to significantly reduce homelessness consistently over the last two to three decades. This **decreasing trend** – the expert notes – is evident using either ETHOS-Light or national definitions. In spite of this continued strong downward trend, fluctuations were observed in specific periods, particularly during the last decade, when the figures stagnated between 2008 and 2012, and then continued falling up to 2018. According to the statistics produced by the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA), in 2018 there were 5,482 homeless people in Finland. Over the last decade, the biggest group of homeless people are those residing temporarily with friends and relatives; this group has been increasing while there has been a clear decline in the number of people living in institutions and sleeping rough. The expert explains that the main explanation for this phenomenon is a shift in emphasis in social and healthcare policy, particularly the adoption of a long-term homelessness strategy based on the provision of permanent affordable housing, on specialised support for the most vulnerable and on prevention services (see Sub-section 3.4 and Box 4).

In the seven **non-EU Member States** examined, the **changes over time** reported by ESPN experts (where available evidence allows for the identification of such evolutions) **are significantly different** from those observed across the EU:

- The Turkish expert also reports a lack of official figures and an incapacity to provide trends over time. However, figures on the number of municipal shelter users in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality show an increase from around 500/600 users during the winter of 2005-06 up to 1,010 users during the winter of 2010-11

- The expert from North Macedonia reports a downward trend in registered homeless people – defined as adult beneficiaries of social welfare who are socially excluded – between 2013 and 2017, based on data released by the State Statistical Office. In December 2017 there were 65 registered homeless persons and 73 registered street children (mostly Roma children). However, as in other countries, the official statistics do not seem to capture the whole picture, since they only cover registered cases receiving assistance from the Centres for Social Work. The Red Cross Skopje database recorded a total of 180 homeless persons in 2017, i.e. almost three times more than the official data.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, the nature of HHE is directly impacted by the historic events which resulted in a great number of refugees and internally displaced persons in need of housing support. ESPN experts from these countries report a decreasing number of both refugees and IDPs requesting support between 2011 and 2018, largely due to the returnee assistance and reintegration process.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, eligibility for housing assistance or housing reconstruction under the returnee programmes (implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Accord) was granted only to those who had personal housing rights or housing property before the war. However, because of the eligibility criteria many families had to look for housing solutions on their own, without institutional assistance. Many of them, mainly those unfit to work and earn income, have settled in collective centres (both legal and illegal). These categories were the last to be assisted. Currently, some of them will be eligible for social housing apartments, built with funds from a Council of Europe Development Bank credit aimed at closing down collective centres.

- In Kosovo (where no official definition of homelessness exists nor any data collection system), an accurate understanding of HHE is a difficult task. However, the ESPN expert points out that homelessness in Kosovo is currently made up of repatriated persons and IDPs assisted with temporary accommodation, living in shelters or in temporary makeshift structures and informal settlements, and women and children facing domestic violence. According to the available data, the number of refugees, repatriated persons and IDPs who need housing support in Kosovo fell considerably from 2009 to 2018. In 2011, a total of 1,227 repatriated persons received assistance in accommodation centres upon arrival; in 2018 only 69 repatriated persons received the same kind of assistance. Emergency assistance – in the form of a rented apartment for up to 12 months – was granted to a total of 5,295 repatriated persons in 2011 and to only 365 people in 2018. According to a report by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR 2019), there are still nearly 90,000 individuals displaced by the conflict who need displacement-related assistance in Kosovo.

- In Serbia, the number of refugees decreased substantially (from 74,487 people in 2011 to 26,502 people in 2018). The number of IDPs also fell during this period: from 209,833 to 199,584 people. As a response to the large numbers of people who, at the time of

their arrival, were not able to secure accommodation, the Serbian state organised urgent accommodation in "Collective Centres", i.e. hotels, schools and other premises transformed into accommodation areas. In 1996, a total of 65,000 people were living in these centres, and in 2018 this figure had dropped to 702 individuals. However, the expert argues, "a protracted refugee and displacement situation continued to the present day".

1.4.2 Main drivers for homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe: the determinant role of housing market pressures

Strong pressures – either longstanding or more recent – on the affordable housing/social housing supply have been identified by ESPN experts across the majority (22 countries) of EU Member States as a key driver for rises in homelessness over the last ten years.

General developments in the **housing market** are significantly contributing to increasing levels of HHE. These developments are multi-fold and include: steep increases in property and rental prices, increasing scarcity of low-cost housing, changes in tenancy laws, liberalisation of rents, limited or reduced public investment in public and/or social housing, increased insecurity of tenure, low and inadequate levels of housing support, cuts in housing allowances, stricter eligibility criteria for accessing social housing, and rising evictions.

The negative impact of these housing market developments is compounded by evidence of **labour market changes**, including the increase in precarious, part-time, low-wage and short-term employment, and also unemployment spikes.

Apart from the multiple pressures and constraints linked to adverse housing market developments, ESPN experts have identified **other significant drivers** for rising homelessness trends. These include: poverty, rising immigration, low levels of welfare benefits or reductions in such support as well as family and health-related factors:

- The Austrian experts report the effect of two structural developments as the major explanatory factors for rising levels of homelessness: i) rising housing costs, especially affecting rented dwellings in urban areas and restricting the availability of low-cost housing; and ii) rising unemployment and the inadequacy of social transfers to cover housing costs.

- In Czechia, the fast growth of housing prices – directly linked to the current economic recovery and higher wages – is negatively affecting people without income from work, those with irregular incomes, poorly qualified individuals and younger people with insufficient financial capacity. Increasing indebtedness and strict legislation on rent arrears are leading to evictions and have been identified as important homelessness triggers. Moreover, the national experts note, a recent government decision has suspended the planned social housing law which was expected to have a pivotal role in promoting affordable housing.

- In Denmark, many factors may help explain the increase in homelessness which took place, despite a context of economic improvement and the introduction of relevant policy changes during the last decade, namely the dissemination of a strategic approach to homelessness. Adverse housing market developments, including housing price increases and reductions in minimum income benefits, particularly affected young people, whose vulnerability to homelessness over the last few years has significantly increased.

- In Germany, the BAGW argues that although immigration has contributed to rising homelessness, the main causes lie in a misguided housing policy which, for decades, has been part of the inadequate fight against poverty in the country.

- In Ireland, some of the main general drivers of the increase in homelessness include: the rapidly rising rents and the absence of effective rent control mechanisms; the shortage of available/affordable accommodation; and the gradual disinvestment in social housing. Available evidence on the growth of family homelessness in Ireland identifies affordability constraints and insecurity of tenure as the main underlying drivers: families leaving private-rented accommodation following receipt of a Notice of Termination (NOT) and leaving family or friends' accommodation due to relationship breakdown or overcrowding.

- The Maltese expert reports the recent liberalisation of the rental market which has brought about sharp and sudden increases in rental prices, exacerbated by a growing demand for housing arising from diverse population dynamics (e.g. young people, flow of immigrants in high-paid jobs, increasing separations/divorces). There is evidence that these shortfalls in affordable housing supply are contributing to a growth of invisible/hidden forms of homelessness in Malta.

Housing affordability problems are common among the majority of the countries analysed, especially as a consequence of the low or inexistent supply of social housing and of unaffordability of rented accommodation. For instance:

- The Greek national experts highlight that as a result of the prolonged (almost ten year) economic crisis, households' disposable income has rapidly decreased, having been hit hard by unprecedented levels of unemployment and considerable cuts in salaries, wages and pensions. This situation, in turn, brought about significant increases in the non-performing housing loans, as well as a deteriorating situation in the overindebtedness of households. These elements, together with the lack of public social housing schemes, have increased vulnerability to homelessness.

- In Italy and Spain, the consequences of the financial crisis, particularly spiking unemployment, resulted in the impoverishment of several population sectors and increased housing hardship. In Italy, evictions increased substantially – evictions caused by arrears more than doubled between 2005 and 2014 – within a context of mismatch between increasing needs and availability of social housing. The Spanish national experts argue that the increase in homelessness during the last decade is mainly due to unemployment and economic deprivation associated with the crisis and to "relational or psychosocial deprivation".

- In Latvia, the crisis also contributed to a serious deterioration of households' economic situation, leading to affordability problems. Within such a context, the structural lack of affordable, safe and stable housing is, the Latvian national expert notes, directly contributing to the rising numbers of homeless people resorting to temporary/emergency accommodation services.

- In Hungary, among the multiple drivers for the increasing numbers of people sleeping rough, the experts believe that the most important is the lack of affordable (social) housing, preventing any possibility for sustainable exits from homelessness. Additionally, the ESPN experts state, the lack of effective prevention mechanisms "puts people systematically at risk of homelessness".

- In both Sweden and the UK, the housing stock has been growing more slowly than would be required by population growth. The Swedish experts refer to a housing shortage in 240 out of the 290 municipalities. The lack of affordable housing is also linked to housing policy changes which led to a highly deregulated housing market and to an erosion of the role of municipal housing companies (in providing public rental housing for all citizens).

Since 2011, municipal housing companies have to operate according to business (for profit) principles. Exclusion eligibility criteria, such as the non-acceptance of social benefits as regular income or rental debts and/or payment notices, prevent many people from accessing municipal housing.

- The Slovenian expert also identifies the housing market as an increasingly important driver of homelessness, particularly due to a lack of social housing and to an increasing number of **evictions**.

In line with the Slovenian expert, experts from several other EU Member States (e.g. BE, CZ, HR, IE, IT, RO, UK) refer to **evictions** as a major trigger for homelessness, linked to rising levels of housing costs overburden, overindebtedness, impoverishment and lack of affordable housing. Here are some examples:

- In Belgium, there was a sharp rise in eviction figures between 2008 and 2014 (a 20% increase) and, in 2014, children were involved in 25% of the eviction procedures in Flanders. Overindebtedness, housing cost overburden, and dwellings declared uninhabitable have been identified as important triggers for rising evictions.

- The Croatian expert reports the particularly vulnerable situation of tenants in privately-owned apartments, whose tenant rights stem from the old political regime, and who are permanently at risk of being evicted by the owners (an estimated 3,734 families in 2017).

- The Romanian expert highlights the phenomenon of mass evictions due to property restitutions, to the lack of housing support policies and to the insufficient social housing supply. Roma households have been particularly vulnerable to these forced evictions.

Finally, in Finland – the only country where homelessness has fallen over the last decades – the ESPN expert clearly identifies the main drivers for positive achievements: i) combatting homelessness through long-term strategic national programmes; ii) developing a policy approach based on a shared goal, bringing together NGOs, municipalities and the government; iii) focusing on the provision of permanent affordable housing as the top priority; and iv) improving support services, especially by providing specialised support for the most vulnerable people.

The results of these findings clearly illustrate the **structural nature of the main triggers of homelessness**, such as the insufficient supply of affordable housing in much of Europe, poverty and inequality, and the lack of extensive preventative systems to counteract the rising number of evictions. Additionally, demographic challenges and mutually reinforcing relationships between addiction and mental illness contribute to increasing challenges regarding the complexity of specialised homelessness interventions.

2   STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TACKLING HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE

There is growing evidence that, in recent years, HHE have emerged – or have been consolidated – as a specific target of public policies in most EU Member States. Yet, the extent to which consistent policy frameworks have been established varies considerably across Europe. A growing number of Member States have developed integrated national or regional strategies to tackle HHE, but in many others HHE policies remain largely separate and uncoordinated.

Section 2 provides an overview of the extent to which strategic responses to homelessness – either developed as a specific strategy (at national or regional level) or as part of wider strategies – are in place in Europe, based on the information contained in the 35 ESPN national reports. Sub-section 2.1 looks at the extent of national or regional strategic approaches to homelessness, either as specific policies or as an integrated part of overall strategies or plans, addressing poverty and social exclusion, housing or other related policy fields. It also includes a brief presentation of the main objectives and overall approaches of such strategic frameworks. Sub-section 2.2 presents a summarised description of the extent to which existing strategies are actually being implemented, monitored and evaluated, including evidence on their effectiveness in tackling HHE. Sub-section 2.3 looks at the level and consistency of funding mechanisms allocated to address HHE across the different European countries, including the role of EU funding (e.g. European Social Fund [ESF], European Regional Development Fund [ERDF], Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived [FEAD]) in enhancing HHE responses. Finally, Sub-section 2.4 provides a summary table identifying whether EU indicators on housing (e.g. housing cost overburden, overcrowding, severe housing deprivation, arrears on mortgage or rent payments) have (not) been used to monitor HHE as part of countries' strategic approaches.

2.1   The extent of European countries' strategic approaches to homelessness

The presence of strategic overall approaches has a strong potential to improve outcomes for homeless people and to reduce HHE over time. Such frameworks tend to provide a sound basis for the development of more integrated and coordinated responses to homelessness, although actual and consistent achievements in reducing homelessness demand more than the mere development of "plans", "action plans", "strategies" or "programmes".

Table 7 summarises the extent to which countries have developed overall strategic policy frameworks to address homelessness, either as specific national or regional strategies, or as part of wider policy frameworks with a specific approach towards tacking homelessness. In those countries where no specific approach to homelessness has been reported, the table identifies the wider national or regional strategies which national experts indicated as relevant to addressing HHE, although no specific approach to homelessness is included in such documents. Only one national expert (from Turkey) did not report the existence of any relevant strategic policy framework.

Table 7: Extent of strategic approaches to homelessness in Europe

	Specific homelessness strategies (1)		Specific approach within wider national strategies	Wider strategy only (non-specific approach)	Strategy(ies) designation (2)
	National	Regional			
Austria		√			Integrated homelessness strategies in Vienna, Upper Austria and Voralberg
Belgium		√			Integrated Plan Against Homelessness 2017-2019 (Flanders)
Bulgaria			√		National Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy 2020
Cyprus				√	Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) scheme; National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence in the Family; Estia scheme
Czechia	√				The Concept of Preventing and Tackling Homelessness Issues in the Czech Republic until 2020
Germany		√			North Rhine-Westphalia Homelessness Strategy
Denmark	√				2009 National Homelessness Strategy; Action Plan to reduce homelessness 2019-2021
Estonia				√	Welfare Development Plan; Development Plan for Children and Families; Estonian energy management development plan
Greece	√*				National Strategy for homeless people in Greece
Spain	√				Comprehensive National Strategy for Homelessness 2015-2020 (ENI-PSH 2015-2020)
Finland	√				National Action Plan for Preventing Homelessness in Finland (AUNE) 2016-2019
France	√				Five-year plan to implement Housing First and combat homelessness
Croatia			√		Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion
Hungary				√	National Social Inclusion Strategy II
Ireland	√				Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness; The Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018-2021
Italy	√				Guidelines for Tackling Severe Adult Marginality in Italy
Lithuania				√	National housing strategy; Action Plan for Increasing Social Inclusion in 2014-2020; Action Plan for the development/ expansion of access to social housing

	Specific homelessness strategies (1)		Specific approach within wider national strategies	Wider strategy only (non-specific approach)	Strategy(ies) designation (2)
	National	Regional			
Luxembourg	√				National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020
Latvia				√	Concept "On Establishment of the Minimum Income Level"; Basic Guidelines for the Development of Social Services
Malta				√	National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion
Netherlands	√				Multi-annual strategy for protected housing and shelter; Homeless Youth Action Plan; Action programme "Home again"; Stimulation programme Housing First Netherlands
Poland			√		Action Programme against Poverty and Social Exclusion. New Dimension of Active Integration
Portugal	√				National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People (ENIPPSA 2017-2023)
Romania			√		Draft National strategy on housing; National strategy regarding poverty reduction and social inclusion; National strategy for social inclusion of Roma ethnic citizens
Sweden		√**			Local housing strategies and action plans to combat homelessness
Slovenia				√	National Programme of Social Care; National Housing Programme
Slovakia		√**			Bratislava's strategy Urbem Pauperats (2017); Strategy for addressing homelessness in the territory of Trnava (2017)
United Kingdom		√			Ending homelessness and rough sleeping: action plan (Scotland); The rough sleeping strategy (England)
Albania			√		National Strategy for Development and Integration; Strategy for Social Housing; Strategy for Decentralisation and Local Governance; Social Inclusion Policy Document; National social protection strategy; National Plan of Action for Integration of Roma and Egyptian communities; National Action Plan for Persons with Disability

	Specific homelessness strategies (1)		Specific approach within wider national strategies	Wider strategy only (non-specific approach)	Strategy(ies) designation (2)
	National	Regional			
Bosnia and Herzegovina				√	The Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII; Regional Housing Programme; EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies
Montenegro				√	National Housing Strategy; Social Housing Programme
North Macedonia			√		National Strategy for reduction of poverty and social exclusion; National Roma Strategy; National Action Plan for Housing
Serbia			√		National Strategy of social housing; Law on housing and maintenance of buildings; Strategies addressing specific groups, i.e. refugees and IDP, Roma population and returnees
Turkey	–	–	–		
Kosovo			√		"National Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo 2018-2022", "Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo 2017-2021", "National Strategy for Communities and Returnees 2014-2018" and "National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence 2016-2020"

(1) In those countries where a national strategy exists, possible regional/ local strategies are not included in this table. Yet, this information is available in the individual country reports. This is the case, for instance, of Ireland and the Netherlands.

(2) In those countries with at least one example of a specific homelessness strategy or plan, no additional wider strategies were included in the designated column of the summary table. Detailed information on all relevant policies can be read in the individual country reports.

* In Greece, the homelessness national strategy has already been drafted and announced, although it has not yet been issued.

** In Sweden and Slovakia, only local strategies are currently in place. In Slovakia, a new comprehensive strategy on homelessness is currently being prepared.

Source: ESPN national reports.

Ten EU Member States (CZ, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT – see Table 7) have developed **national strategies** aimed at the delivery of integrated strategic responses to homelessness (and in both Greece and Slovakia, national strategies have been announced). The evidence provided by ESPN national experts shows important common elements in the different approaches, as well as some disparities across countries. For instance:

- "The Concept of Preventing and Tackling Homelessness Issues in the Czech Republic until 2020" was legally adopted in August 2013. It was drawn up with the participation of a wide range of public and private stakeholders and the approach adopted is based on a coordinated approach, focusing on ensuring access to or preserving housing, rather than providing shelter or temporary accommodation. Prevention, adequate support through all

intervention stages and expanding the Housing First concept are the basis for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the support system.

- "Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness" is a multi-annual (2016-2021) broadly-based ambitious action plan seeking to: i) increase the overall supply of new homes to 25,000 per annum by 2020; ii) deliver an additional 50,000 social housing units in the period to 2021; and iii) meet the housing needs of an additional 87,000 households through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme and the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

- The "Guidelines for Tackling Severe Adult Marginality in Italy", approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in December 2015, represent the official adoption of the Housing First approach. By giving priority to the "right to housing" over any other welfare or therapeutic interventions, this approach is innovative compared to the existing system(s) of provision of social and health services for homeless people in Italy.

- On 18 January 2013, the Luxembourg government adopted a "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020". The strategy proposes a different set of approaches comprising: homelessness prevention, access to permanent accommodation, immediate and adequate responses to emergencies and governance strengthening. The Housing First model is presented as the overarching principle underpinning the above-mentioned approaches.

- In the Netherlands, a set of various national strategies address different areas and/or different groups of homeless population: i) the multi-annual strategy for protected housing and shelter; ii) the Homeless Youth Action Plan; iii) the Action programme "Home again"; and iv) the Stimulation programme Housing First Netherlands. One common element underpinning all these strategies is a focus on prevention, access to permanent accommodation and the provision of adequate and flexible support geared to homeless people's needs.

- The Portuguese strategy for the integration of homeless persons 2017-2023 (ENIPSSA) was adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2017. Although the ENIPSSA does not reflect a decisive shift towards the adoption of a housing-led approach towards homelessness, it represents the first overall institutional and financial commitment from the national public housing authorities towards enabling access to permanent housing solutions for homeless people. The promotion and financing of Housing First projects are included as a specific measure in the strategy.

- In Spain, the Comprehensive National Strategy for Homelessness 2015-2020 (ENI-PSH) has been considered as a central target of the social services system. It was developed as a parliamentary initiative approved in May 2014, in which the Third Sector for Social Action (TSSA) played an important role. The ENI-PSH provides the institutional framework for enhancing joint action involving the Central Administration, the Autonomous Communities and the TSSA. However, the regional and local governments have institutional and administrative powers in the development of the strategy. As in Czechia, the strategy's approach prioritises the implementation of housing-led approaches, as opposed to the traditional housing-ready model of service provision.

The Greek experts report that a national strategic approach to homelessness is currently being prepared by the national government. They underline that the harsh impact of the financial crisis on the rise of HHE was an important driver for the adoption of policy measures and programmes aimed at supporting homeless people and people at risk of housing exclusion (e.g. housing and work integration programmes, legal protection against overindebtedness, housing benefits). The

official presentation of the overall approach of the National Strategy underlined the wish to establish "an integrated framework of policy measures and services for the prevention and immediate intervention to address housing problems" with the ultimate objective to "ensure affordable and secure housing for all residents". The ESPN national expert notes that although the strategy is named "strategy for homeless people", its scope reaches beyond this group, to include those at risk of housing exclusion.

In six other countries (AT, BE, DE, SE, SK, UK), national experts report the existence of **regional and/or local strategic approaches to homelessness**. In Austria, Belgium, Germany and the UK, countries with a federal legal structure, the provision of homelessness services is not uniformly regulated at national level and there are no national-level homelessness strategies or plans.

- Likewise, in Belgium, HHE are in principle a "regional" competence, i.e. a competence of the Regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels) as well as of the (French, Flemish, German-speaking) Communities. Although there is no integrated national homelessness strategy, the *federal* government is responsible for ensuring that the Cooperation Agreement on Homelessness[23] of 12 May 2014 between the federal state, regions and communities is implemented, to facilitate cooperation and structural dialogue between the various levels and to ensure shelter and assistance to homeless people during the winter period. At the regional level, the first Flemish Integrated Homelessness action plan was developed for 2017-2019 by a multi-stakeholder steering group. It is based on the strategic goals set by FEANTSA[24], and formulates four strategic goals to end homelessness: i) preventing evictions; ii) preventing youth homelessness; iii) tackling chronic homelessness; and iv) developing an integrated homelessness policy.

- The German expert notes that "it is in the competence of the federal state to establish the legal framework, such as tenancy law, tax law, planning law and social and housing benefit law. It is up to the *Länder* to provide and finance housing benefits (…)". The involvement of the *Länder* in developing policies to tackle HHE varies greatly. One particularly relevant example of a specific and integrated homelessness approach is being implemented by the *Bundesland* of North Rhine-Westphalia. An action programme entitled "Help in housing emergencies" was introduced in January 2016. The central objectives of the programme are: i) homelessness prevention; ii) integration of homeless people into normal, permanent housing conditions (housing procurement); and iii) the provision of housing support for persons formerly threatened and affected by homelessness. Housing-First pilot projects based on public-private partnerships are being promoted. According to the ESPN national expert, the strategy can be described as a housing-focused strategy accompanied by high-intensity support.

- The UK has an established statutory housing and welfare system of laws, guidance, funding and institutions to prevent and respond to homelessness. Yet, the ESPN expert for the UK notes, there is now substantial divergence in law between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As an example, the "Rough sleeping strategy for England" (approved in August 2018) is built on a three-fold vision: prevent, intervene and recover. The ESPN expert highlights: the announcement of £50 million for new building specifically for formerly homeless people outside London, and £70 million over 2019-20/2020-21 for local authority activity and projects; the withdrawal of the proposed reduction in housing benefit available to users of relatively costly "supporting people" services; and

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[23] Further details on the cooperation agreement are available in the individual country report.

[24] The "Toolkit for Developing an Integrated Homelessness Strategy" is available at
https://www.feantsa.org/download/enfr_2006toolkit_5b1_5d-2-34521781459519216752.pdf?force=true.

the provision of housing with support or floating support services for people with special needs, including ex-homeless people and people vulnerable due to age, disabilities, substance problems, including some ex-homeless people. In Scotland, the 2018 "Ending homelessness and rough sleeping action plan" builds on a decade of strategic action and reductions in homelessness with an emphasis on dealing with remaining problems. In England, the strategy came after a period of rising homelessness and without a national approach. Finally, the ESPN expert highlights that despite small extra funding, the overall budget for rough sleeping and statutory homelessness support/prevention in the UK has fallen.

Sweden and Slovakia provide examples of **local or city-level homelessness strategies** within an overall context where no national integrated homelessness approach is in place.

- The Swedish experts recall the peculiarity of the country's situation in this regard compared to neighbouring countries, where overall strategic approaches to homelessness have been in place for over a decade. In fact – they recall – back in 2007 the Swedish government launched a national homelessness strategy – "Homelessness, Multiple Faces, Multiple Responsibilities – A Strategy to Combat Homelessness and Exclusion from the Housing Market" – which failed to reach its ambitious objectives and came to an end in 2009. Currently, several municipalities, however, have launched their own local housing strategies and action plans to combat homelessness. Long-term housing solutions are often formulated as a main objective with a strong focus on preventive work, especially in relation to evictions.

- In Slovakia, no integrated strategic approach to homelessness has ever been in place at a national level. Yet, there is evidence of positive examples of integrated strategic approaches to preventing and tackling homelessness at the city level. The regional capital cities of Bratislava and Trnava both, for example, have homelessness strategies. Both strategies are based on the ETHOS-Light categories and include actions aiming at: prevention, homelessness reduction, service quality improvement, implementation of Housing First projects, access to affordable housing, increased cooperation, and the setting up of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

In eight Eastern European countries (four EU countries and four non-EU countries: BG, HR, PL, RO, AL, MK, RS, XK), ESPN national experts report the existence of **wider national strategies** which include more or less extensive and/or targeted measures directly addressing homelessness. In the case of Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania, the experts mention the existence of such policy measures within wider strategies or plans primarily targeting a reduction in poverty and social exclusion (see Table 7). Yet, the extent and ambition of such policy proposals vary between these four Member States:

- In Bulgaria, the expert reports the inclusion of actions aimed at improving the housing conditions of vulnerable groups and supporting the homeless, by developing comprehensive and integrated homelessness services.

- In Croatia, the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion for the period 2014 – 2020[25] includes actions aiming at the improvement of homelessness services and at enhancing multi-stakeholder cooperation to ensure access to all required support, as well as strengthening homelessness data collection mechanisms. The Strategy, the expert

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[25] Available at https://mdomsp.gov.hr/pristup-informacijama/nadzor-i-predstavke-1679/strategije/strategija-borbe-protiv-siromastva-i-socijalne-iskljucenosti-2014-2020/659.

notes, explicitly endorses recommendations made by the EU umbrella organisations focused on tackling homelessness and poverty.

- The Polish expert reports that one out of the six priorities of the "Action Programme against Poverty and Social Exclusion. New Dimension of Active Integration" directly addresses the prevention of housing insecurity and includes actions to tackle homelessness. Four actions are included within this priority: i) providing financial support for the development of temporary accommodation solutions and for building social housing; ii) preventative actions to prevent evictions, including legislative changes; and iii) strengthening of existing statistical data and research methodologies, including the development of a National Research Platform (*Krajowa Platforma Badawcza*) on HHE. Housing-First and housing-led services are mentioned, although not as central key actions.

- In Romania, the National strategy regarding poverty reduction and social inclusion (2015–2020) includes measures aimed at improving emergency responses, strengthening preventative services, adopting urban regeneration programmes in order to address the issue of illegal/informal settings, and ending illegal evictions. Yet, the expert notes that the strategy's operational plan for the whole period covered by the strategy only seems to cover implementation of actions related to reducing the number of street children/homeless children and consolidating the support capacity to respond to street homelessness.

The descriptions given by **four non-EU** ESPN national experts of the approach to homelessness in their existing overall strategies reveal some peculiarities directly related to the nature of HHE in their national contexts, starting with the scope of the overall strategies identified as relevant (see Table 7). In Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, there is a specific focus on the development of policy approaches aimed at improving the living conditions and the reintegration opportunities for specific population groups/communities: Roma and Egyptian communities in the case of Albania; refugees, IDPs, repatriated persons and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo; Roma communities in North Macedonia; and Roma, returnees, refugees and internally displaced populations (IDPs) in the case of Serbia. The need to urgently address a wide range of housing needs among these populations, to enhance their social protection rights, to ensure access to education, employment and health, and to address legislative and administrative hurdles are amongst the most commonly cited aims.

In nine countries (CY, EE, HU, LT, LV, MT, SI, BA, ME), ESPN experts report the **lack of any specific approach to homelessness**, either an approach targeted at HHE or as part of any other broader existing strategy. Overall, this lack of a targeted approach seems more frequent in Eastern European countries (see Figure 2), although it is also referred to by the Maltese ESPN expert. Unsurprisingly, the scope of these wider strategies is significantly broader than that of the policy documents identified above.

Strategies related to housing (e.g. BA, CY, LT, ME, SI) or social care/social services (e.g. EE, LV, SI) are the most commonly cited HHE-relevant policy documents. Other pertinent policy areas include: Guaranteed Minimum Income schemes (e.g. CY, LV), poverty and social inclusion (e.g. HU, MT), domestic and family violence (e.g. CY), and integration of specific population groups (e.g. BA).

Figure 2: Specific/non-specific approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe
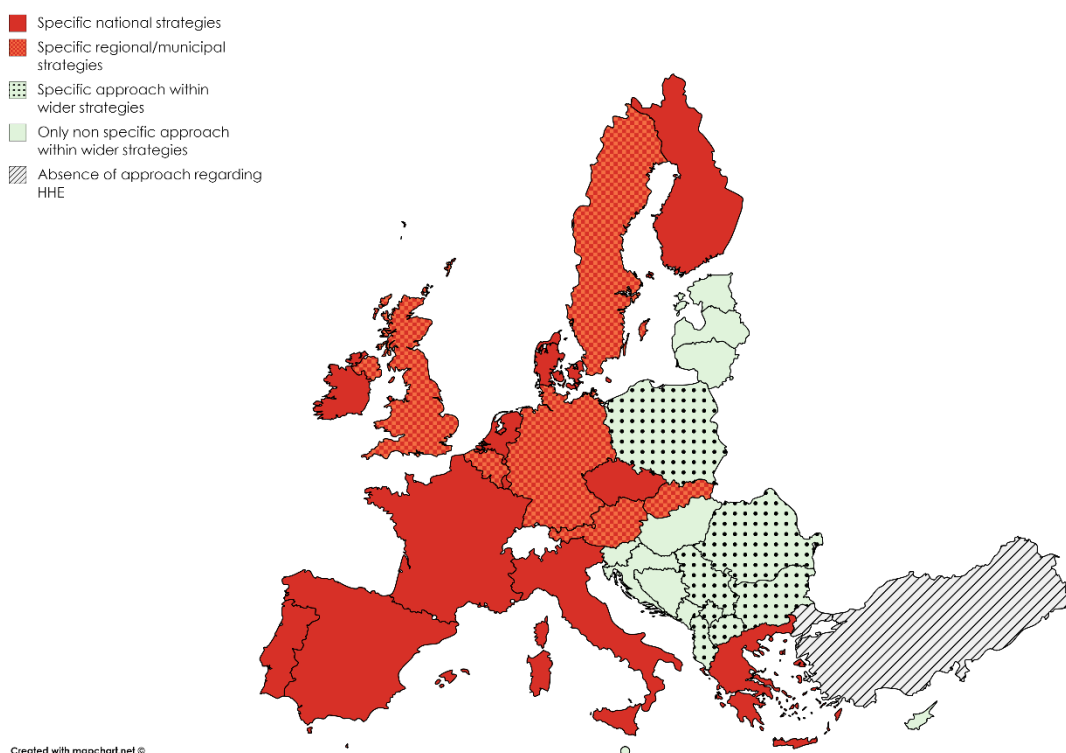
Note: This figure was created on the basis of the data included in Table 7. Thus, the criteria used for including the countries in the different categories in this table also apply here.

Source: ESPN national reports.

In Estonia, for example, the experts note that the Welfare Development Plan for 2016-2023 and the Development Plan for Children and Families 2012-2020 have an explicit aim of preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion, which indirectly also helps in preventing HHE. The Slovenian National Housing Programme 2015-2025 foresees the temporary provision of housing units for the most socially excluded population groups, including homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. The Latvian expert critically assesses the overall lack of a strategic approach to either HHE or housing, and provides one example of this fragmentary approach to HHE in the Concept on the Establishment of the Minimum Income Level: "housing support for at-poverty and social exclusion risk groups of the population is planned only via the review of the criteria for granting the housing benefit". In Cyprus, as part of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence in the Family, a new structure – Woman's Home – is planned, to ensure overall and integrated coordination of all support services and adequate protection to women experiencing violence in the family. Malta is reported to have been investing heavily in areas indirectly addressing HHE, particularly through the development of social housing: for example, the current National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, 2014-2024 includes a specific section on the promotion of more affordable and adequate housing, which is presented as "addressing HHE". However – the expert notes – this is the only mention of HHE throughout the document which reflects a wider understanding of the concept. The ESPN report on Bosnia and Herzegovina refers to several broader approaches related to specific population groups as approaches contributing to the tackling of HHE. These include Strategies for the reintegration of repatriated persons, returnees, refugees, IDPs and Roma and Ashkali communities. These strategies

have a strong emphasis on housing reconstruction, on the provision of social housing and other affordable solutions, on the closing down of collective centres and camps and also on support for reintegration.

The Hungarian situation deserves a **special mention** within this overall analysis of existing strategic approaches to HHE. The Hungarian experts provide a critical overview of the national policy framework, recalling the recent revival of repressive measures related to rough sleeping, which included an amendment of the national Constitution to prohibit and criminalise "habitual residence in public spaces". There is wide agreement among professionals and human rights advocates, in Hungary, that although it is very important to reduce rough sleeping, this should not be done via punishment and criminalisation but rather through social and housing policies. However, Hungary lacks any comprehensive and consistent housing policy framework, leading to a highly fragmented system fostering increasing inequalities. Even the (revised) National Social Inclusion Strategy does not address the issue of homelessness at all, only mentioning housing affordability as an important social challenge. In such a challenging context, homelessness service providers came together to prepare an unofficial homelessness strategy (see Box 1).

Box 1: The Hungarian unofficial homelessness strategy

In 2015, a set of recommendations were compiled in an unofficial document produced by service providers attempting to position potential responses to homelessness within a broader housing and social policy framework. This implicit strategy, entitled "Proposed activities regarding homelessness 2015. From the street to housing. Proposals to restructure the service provision of the homeless" [Hajléktalanügyi teendők 2015 Utcától lakásig. Javaslatok a hajléktalan emberek ellátásának átalakítására], was initially supported by the Ministry of Human Resources, but was subsequently rejected. The implicit strategy has been broadly accepted by NGOs and other actors even without government support. The implicit strategy focuses mainly on potential solutions to get homeless people off the street and to include them in the service provision system, which remains a shelter-based, staircase-oriented system, with some innovative housing-led services. It includes important fine-tunings with regard to the provision of needs-based support, and more comprehensive and specialised services. The strategy also focuses on areas such as prevention, service integration, housing-led approaches, affordable rental stock (public and private, rental agencies), minimum benefit systems and labour market inclusion.

Source: ESPN Hungarian report.

2.2   Monitoring and implementation of existing strategic approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion

This sub-section presents a summarised description of the extent to which strategies are actually being implemented, monitored and evaluated, including evidence on their effectiveness in tackling HHE. However, the analysis only draws on evidence from countries which have identified specific targeted approaches to HHE, within specific national, regional or strategies. Detailed evidence on the assessment of implementation progress and monitoring mechanisms across the 35 countries covered by the ESPN can be read in the individual country reports.

One overall conclusion to be drawn from a comparative analysis of the situation across these 35 countries regards the **wide discrepancy of the evidence available on implementation and monitoring** outcomes, which is mostly related to the robustness or rather frailty of the setting up and/or application of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of homelessness support services (see Sub-section 3.3) provides additional relevant information giving a better understanding of the variances described in the next paragraphs.

Denmark, Finland, France and Ireland display the strongest evidence-based mechanisms enabling assessment of the implementation of existing strategies. In other countries (e.g. ES, IT, SK), however, there is a lack of evidence allowing for any assessment of the effectiveness of implementation of the strategies, often arising from weaknesses in the application of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In several other countries (e.g. CZ, DE, PT, SE, UK), monitoring mechanisms are in place and provide some evidence of progress being achieved either at national level or in specific regions. Some country examples are provided below:

- In Denmark, the different phases of the National Strategy Against Homelessness have been regularly evaluated by two external organisations, and a biannual mapping of homelessness is undertaken by VIVE – The Danish Centre for Social Science Research. The successive evaluations have shown that Housing First and the three housing support methods – ACT, CTI and ICM – are successful in helping homeless people to get and maintain a home of their own. Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis of ICM and CTI showed that CTI paid off already in the first year after the intervention. The evaluation also showed that various structural factors made implementation of the strategy more difficult, particularly the impact of the economic crisis which put the municipalities under a lot of strain.

- In Finland, the primary means of monitoring the effectiveness of the strategies are the official statistics collected and monitored at the national and local levels. Figures show that Finland has managed to reduce homelessness significantly in the last two to three decades (see Sub-section 1.4.1). Additionally, once in every governmental period, i.e. every fourth year, a specific extensive study on the adequacy of basic protection [*Perusturvan riittävyys*] is carried out to evaluate the results of the governmental policies.

- In France, the five-year plan to implement Housing First and combat homelessness is run by the inter-ministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing (DIHAL). The Ministry for Territorial Development – responsible for both general rehousing programmes and for the Housing First programme – has set up a significant monitoring initiative. Although it is still too early to assess results, some evidence is already available: during the first months of 2019, several areas have taken up this programme, organising their own steering committees and signing conventions with local operators; rental through intermediate parties has increased significantly; the allocation of social housing for homeless people leaving a shelter has gone up; and over 1,300 new places have been opened in boarding houses.

- In Czechia, as in France, an inter-ministerial task-force was established for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating progress achieved in the implementation of the national strategy for preventing and tackling homelessness. Since 2014, regular reports have been produced and submitted for government approval. The evaluation has shown that progress has been mainly achieved in the implementation of pilot projects focusing on the rapid re-housing of families with children, developing housing programmes in socially excluded territories, developing methodological guides for preventative services, and in strengthening capacity building among support workers. Less progress has been noted with regard to legislative changes and in introducing systemic measures, leading the ESPN national experts to argue that the strategy has not yet been able to produce a significant policy shift in this area.

- The German expert reports on a specific evaluation system which has been implemented in the municipalities of North Rhine-Westphalia. In spite of the lack of harmonised information from all the municipalities, due to extremely different organisational structures and data collection systems, the evaluation gave an overall positive

assessment of the effectiveness of the existing support system: in cities with specialist centres, preventive support was assessed as effective by all participants and around two thirds of the at-risk housing situations were actually secured.

- In Luxembourg, the National Strategy against HHE 2013-2020 is still struggling to apply the planned governance mechanisms to enhance collaboration among the different stakeholders, creating synergies and optimising available resources.

- The Italian expert notes that it is impossible to assess the level of implementation of the Guidelines for Tackling Severe Adult Marginality in Italy, as a result of the very general guidance provided in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of the policy at local level.

- Similarly, in Spain, the experts note, the absence of any Action Plan prevents any reporting on implementation of the ENI-PSH 2015-2020 which, in fact, has been practically paralysed due to a lack of institutional and financial commitment. Nevertheless, one positive impact of the approval of this first homelessness strategy in Spain has been the development of strategic approaches in several Autonomous Regions and large cities (e.g. Madrid, Basque Country, Barcelona, Zaragoza).

Overall, the evidence reported by ESPN experts shows important and consistent progress being made in some (if only a few) EU Member States. Mostly, however, it demonstrates **the need to significantly strengthen demonstrable effective evidence-based policies** which require robust political and institutional commitment, shared responsibility, extensive cooperation and coordination, robust data collection and reporting mechanisms and adequate resourcing.

2.3 Tackling homelessness and housing exclusion: the adequacy of funding mechanisms

This sub-section discusses the findings from the ESPN national reports on the adequacy of existing funding mechanisms to address HHE, including the allocation of funding for: a) capital expenditure (e.g. funding for social housing); b) supporting people's access to housing (e.g. through specific programmes enabling access to permanent housing, through social protection system or tax relief); and c) supporting non-housing solutions (e.g. emergency/temporary responses). An additional question addressed here is the extent to which EU funding (e.g. ESF, ERDF, FEAD) has played an important role in enhancing HHE responses in the different countries.

The level of evidence provided by the ESPN national reports to help assess the adequacy of existing funding mechanisms to address HHE is highly unbalanced, and in some countries (e.g. BE, EE, ES, ME, MK) it is impossible to provide any accurate picture on funding adequacy. Moreover, several reports provide detailed information on the level of financial resources allocated to different policy areas which directly or indirectly address HHE. This sub-section does not present such details on the level of funding, but rather focuses on the assessments given by national experts regarding the adequacy of funding. A detailed presentation of the above-mentioned information on the level of funding in the different countries can be read in the individual country reports.

2.3.1 Insufficient and inadequate funding: a major challenge

Broadly speaking, the most noticeable outcome of a comparative analysis of the evidence provided across the 35 European countries under scrutiny is the **overall insufficient and inadequate funding** devoted to preventing and fighting homelessness across Europe. Funding is insufficient vis-a-vis existing needs and inadequate with regard to actual impact on the ability to resolve homelessness and to ensure adequate resources within countries. Other problematic aspects highlighted by experts include evidence of recent reductions in the level of funding for the

development of policies and programmes, absence of funding mechanisms within national strategic approaches to homelessness, sustainability challenges related to short-term financing models, and threats to the maintenance of national level resources following the end of international financial support.

In a small number of countries (e.g. CY, LU, MT, SK, NL) national experts also identify **some positive aspects** and/or developments with regard to the adequacy of existing funding mechanisms. These include: the presence of significant funding investment to promote permanent housing for families (e.g. CY) and social housing (e.g. MT); broadly adequate financing mechanisms and increased funds for the implementation of national strategies in recent times, although the gap resulting from earlier years is still significant (e.g. LU); recent increases in budget allocations for the funding of homelessness services, although not necessarily meeting existing and increasing needs (e.g. IE, IT); legislative changes which may strengthen municipalities' control over budgets, paving the way to more adequate models of service provision (e.g. NL); and city-level commitments to increase budgets for developing homelessness service provision (e.g. SK).

National experts from virtually all the 35 ESPN countries identify a number of shortcomings which contribute to overall insufficient and inadequate levels of funding to address HHE. The following points illustrate some of the main difficulties affecting the adequacy of funding across several EU and non-EU countries.

In a significant number of countries (e.g. AT, DE, DK, EE, ES, IT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SK, AL, XK), national experts refer to **considerable differences in funding capacity between different municipalities and/or regions**, directly affecting the level and quality of HHE responses and imposing significant pressures on local authorities in this particular policy area. Here are some examples:

- In Austria, the transfer of finances negotiated between the Federal Republic, the federal provinces and the municipalities does not earmark resources for measures and services related to housing and homelessness; thus, it is up to the provinces and municipalities whether they prioritise these areas, resulting in a very substantial differences in the availability of services and municipal housing across the country.

- The Estonian expert reports that housing is an obligation falling to the local authorities. These have differing levels of financial resources, and thus, the availability and quality of the services vary significantly.

- The Italian experts highlight the increasing pressure on local budgets as a result of several factors, e.g. severe cuts in the (few) available national resources devoted to the housing sector following the financial crisis (while, at the same time, national resources specifically targeted at the homeless have been introduced). Following the reduction and further exhaustion of the national "Fund to support low-income tenants", moreover, many municipalities, for example, struggled to continue providing housing support to low-income tenants, whereas others have completely eliminated it.

- The Polish expert notes that the financing of homelessness policies in Poland is very modest and that it has been affected by a gradually reduced participation of central government. Local governments, who bear the main responsibility for the financing of policies tackling HHE, are faced with increasing unmet financing needs and increasing requests for support from the main NGOs operating in the field of HHE.

- The Romanian expert reports an overall lack of adequate financing mechanisms and an ineffective financial decentralisation of all social services. The lack of transparency of the existing financial mechanisms and allocation procedures hinders proper monitoring and

evaluation. Moreover, the financing of service provision largely remains a matter for the discretion of local authorities, thus depending both on the level of political support and willingness and on their actual financial and administrative capacity.

- The Albanian expert reports a significant increase of the total budget allocated to social housing between 2017 and 2019 (+30%). She mentions that the National Strategy on Social Housing sets out a long-term government commitment to support housing. The strategy, together with the legal framework on social housing, requires from municipalities that they provide a financial contribution in order to be able to access central government funds. Yet, it does not specify how municipalities with lower capacities and resources will be considered, nor how the provision of services to homeless people will be ensured.

- The Kosovar expert reports a low level of implementation of existing municipal three-year social housing programmes, as municipalities lack the necessary funding.

Evidence on **insufficient and/or inadequate funding** in relation to existing (often increasing) needs form the bulk of the descriptions (e.g. BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, UK, AL, BA, MK, RS, TR, XK) made by national experts in assessing their country's position in relation to the adequacy of funding mechanisms to address HHE. For instance:

- In Bulgaria, there is evidence of insufficient and inadequate financial resources being allocated to tackle HHE. The bulk of available funding is directed towards the renovation of social housing, which is largely out of reach of long-term homeless people, for whom the only available support options are non-housing support services. Moreover, even the financing of non-housing low intensity support services (e.g. shelters) has been seriously affected (some of them closed down), following the government's decision, in 2014, to reduce by a third the financing of these facilities.

- Likewise, in Czechia, in recent years, the emphasis on non-housing solutions, including temporary and crisis forms of housing, is increasing due to the insufficient support to social housing. Yet, even the operation of temporary/crisis accommodation for homeless people is affected by the underfinancing of these services and although the capacity has increased, data on rejected applicants for temporary/crisis accommodation show the gap between existing supply and demand.

- A gap between the increase in people's needs and the availability of relevant funding is well illustrated by the Danish ESPN expert. According to available data, the number of homeless people rose by 14% from 2013 to 2017, whereas municipal expenditure on socially vulnerable people fell by 3% to €940 million in 2017. Additionally, the number and share of homeless people with a mental illness has increased in tandem with regional cuts to the psychiatric sector.

- The Finnish expert reports that, especially in the big cities, the need for reasonably priced rental housing is not being met. This, according to the expert, is mainly because funding mechanisms do not have sufficient resources to adequately fund the necessary capital expenditure (e.g. funding for social housing).

- The French expert highlights the potential negative impacts of ongoing insufficient funding of the HHE sector on the success of the national five-year plan to implement Housing First and combat homelessness. Since the 2018 Finance Act, successive budget cuts have amounted to an annual 1.5 billion euros, and a reduction from 128,000 social dwellings in 2016 to scarcely 100,000 in 2018 has already been observed. Moreover, reform of the financing model for the housing and social reinsertion centres (CHRS) has

brought about a reduction in their income. This has not encouraged changes in the working philosophy of these services towards the adoption of housing-led/Housing First approaches.

- The Hungarian financing system is reported by the national experts to be a "dumb but safe" system, which provides secure and stable financing but at very modest levels. It does not stimulate any type of innovation in service provision, which is mostly facilitated by EU funds. The overall costs of homelessness services are reported to be only covered up to 60%, through the per capita state financing system.

- In Ireland, the expert states, the increase in homelessness in recent years has seen a corresponding increase in funding for the provision of homelessness services. Yet, a significant proportion of funding for homelessness services is being directed to the provision of accommodation for families experiencing homelessness, including placing families in hotels and in Family Hubs[26]. According to the Irish expert, the prioritisation of Family Hubs (which are emergency in nature) underlines the government's commitment to this form of temporary accommodation response as a policy solution. The concentration of most of the spending in emergency and temporary accommodation, and of most of this in resourcing private accommodation in Dublin, has raised criticisms from the NGO sector regarding the inadequacy of available funding in Ireland. Additionally, the amount of funding going to social housing has also been increased, but nowhere near enough to meet the targets set out in the national strategy.

- In both Lithuania and Latvia, the experts consider the level of funding for social housing and homelessness-related services to be very low, and therefore inadequate to meet existing and future needs.

- In Portugal, according to the expert, the national homelessness strategy's allocated budget for the first two years seems to leave very little room for enhancing housing-focused support services, as the bulk of direct allocations are concentrated on reinforcing the support to previously existing non-housing services (e.g. temporary accommodation centres and shelters, and direct intervention teams).

- The Slovenian expert reports that the supply of social housing is insufficient in the country and that central and local authorities have no interest in the construction of non-profit housing.

- Rising numbers of homeless households and increasing use of expensive temporary housing did not trigger real change in spending on statutory homelessness in the UK, according to the ESPN expert. Existing local authority homelessness budgets were £750 million lower in 2017-18 than 2008-09, while new funds available to local authorities in 2017-18 totalled £37 million. After initial efficiency savings, evidence from local authorities suggests that "there is little doubt that further reductions have led to reduced services".

- In North Macedonia, assessing the adequacy of funding mechanisms is a difficult task. The national expert notes that the 2004 National programme for tackling the issues of socially excluded groups did not come with monitoring mechanisms, a fiscal scenario or budgeting information. Nevertheless, compared to other neighbouring countries, North Macedonia displays a significantly lower level of housing expenditure (0.02 million euro

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[26] See Section 3 for a more detailed description of this type of service.

in 2016). Public financing of the only existing Centre for Homeless People in the country only covers the provision of basic support needs.

- The Serbian expert reports one important obstacle to the adequacy of funding mechanisms: the public administration's inability to efficiently and effectively use the available financial resources. Understaffing in the public administration, but also across the Centres for Social Work (CSWs), is reportedly having a negative impact on the implementation of policies and in the provision of support.

- In the case of Kosovo, the national expert notes, there is no designated budget code for financing social housing projects in the municipal or ministerial budgets, hence no guaranteed funding for such projects. According to the expert, this is likely to change as the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning is working with the Ministry of Finance to allow designated budget codes at the ministerial and municipal level for financing social housing projects.

In a small number of countries (e.g. EL, ES, LT, SK), national experts report hindrances related to the **absence of funding mechanisms** to underpin the implementation of existing strategies to address HHE. In Greece, the already announced new homelessness national strategy does not provide any kind of funding information, except the short-term Action Plan for the period 2019-2021, which includes an allocation of EUR 20 million per year from the State to help finance the operation of relevant structures and the provision of support services. In Spain, funding of the ENI-PSH is addressed in a very generic way in the programme document. Detailed guidelines on the actual funding procedures should be specified in the so-called Comprehensive Care Plans for Homeless Persons. As the first national comprehensive care plan has not yet been developed, the volume of the planned investment and its distribution is unknown.

National experts raise an important issue in four non-EU countries (BA, ME, MK, RS): **the significant role of international financial support,** which constitutes a key source of funding for the development of programmes addressing HHE. For instance:

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ESPN expert highlights the crucial role of international financial support. Gradual reduction in support for housing reconstruction programmes aimed at facilitating returns was not matched by an increase in government financing, which caused difficulties in addressing assessed needs. Currently, international financial support for addressing housing needs of returnees and IDPs in Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided through cross-border regional projects which can include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

- In Montenegro, the Council of Europe Development Fund played an important role in the development of housing programmes for particularly vulnerable groups (refugees, IDPs); unfortunately, it is not possible to assess the adequacy of funding mechanisms.

- In Serbia, the construction of social housing units for refugees, IDPs, Roma and other homeless people has been funded mainly by international assistance and bank loans, along with funding from the central budget. The national expert reports sustainability challenges arising within the system. One example is the funding of emergency shelters in some less developed Local Social Governments (LSG), which are funded more from external assistance than from local budgets; there is evidence that, in a few cases, shelters were closed after the donor's programme expired.

One additional relevant (and unique) source of funding was highlighted by the national expert for Kosovo: the diaspora funding, which is an important source of funding to address HHE in the country.

2.3.2 Enhancing strategic responses to homelessness and housing exclusion: the role of EU funding

This sub-section briefly covers the evidence reported by ESPN national experts as regards the role of EU funding in strategically addressing HHE in their countries.

Overall, there are **only eleven countries** (BA, BG, CZ, EE, EL, HR, HU, IT, RO, RS, XK) where **national experts report that EU funding has played an important role** in enhancing HHE responses in their respective country. With the exception of Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, these are all EU Member States, with a strong presence of Eastern European countries (see Figure 3). It is important to highlight that the criteria for assessing the relative importance of EU funding have to be interpreted within respective national contexts. It is often the case, for example, that the overall national funding dedicated to HHE has been assessed as very limited, and therefore the EU funding has become a more significant part of the overall financial resources.

Figure 3: Countries where EU funding is deemed important
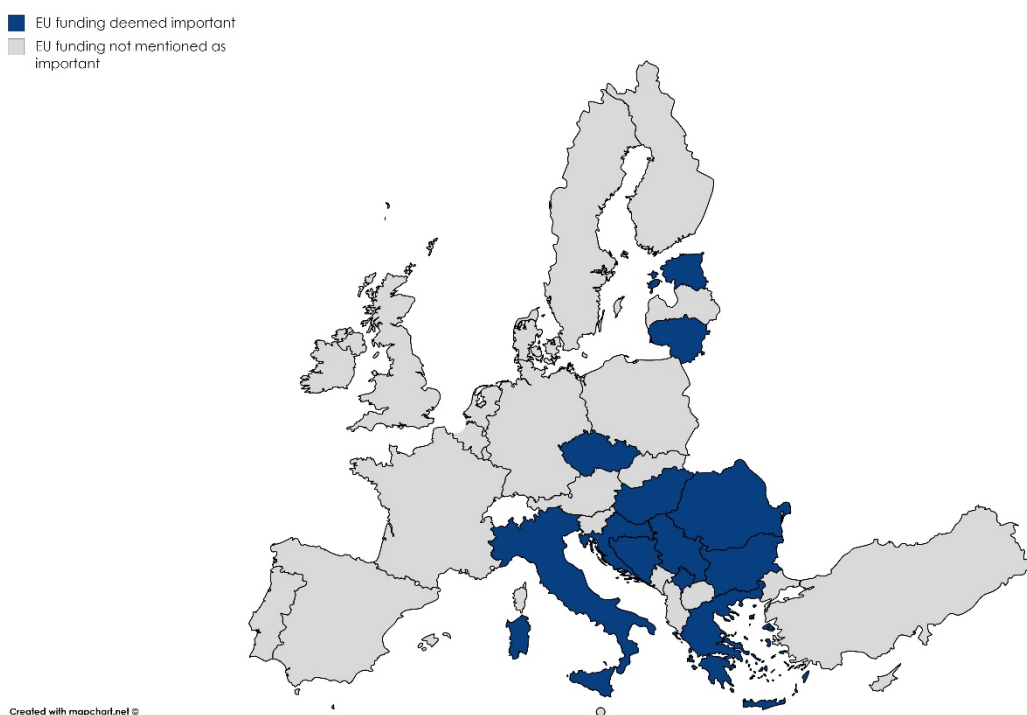
Source: ESPN national reports.

Among the majority of countries where **EU funding was not considered important** in strategically addressing HHE, several arguments were put forward by ESPN experts. These can be broadly summarised in two main points: i) the focus of the EU support did not directly address relevant HHE issues (e.g. AT, BE, DE, FI, LU, LV, MT); and ii) the level of EU funding for HHE is comparatively limited in relation to total funding and its impact is restricted. The French case is somewhat distinctive within this group of countries. The French expert, although recognising that, overall, EU funds do not play an important role in enhancing HHE responses, highlights the role of the FEAD, which is an important source of financing for food support programmes targeting homeless people. A similar remark is made by the Luxembourg national expert.

In the countries where ESPN national experts highlight the important role of **EU funding** in addressing HHE, they put forward various reasons for this. These may be related to the nature of the support provided by EU funding (e.g. BG, CZ, HR) and/or the impact of such funding in terms of the overall resources dedicated to this area (e.g. EL, IT, RO, RS, XK).

In Bulgaria, EU funds play an important role in the renovation and construction of social housing and are described as a "promising opportunity". The national expert refers to a specific example of a project to build social homes within a closed complex, which will accommodate a total of 232 vulnerable people. A rental contract of three years has been concluded with the municipality, which will also provide access to social integration activities and programmes.

In several countries (e.g. CZ, EE, HR, IT), EU funding has been vital in supporting implementation of existing strategic approaches to HHE (either as separate strategies or within wider strategies).

- In Czechia, EU funding (e.g. ERDF, ESF, FEAD) has played a crucial role in bridging the gap between proposed key measures included in the national strategy and their actual implementation on the ground. The most important areas where these funds have been used are support for social housing, support for Housing First pilot projects and support for innovations in prevention and social services.

- A similar argument was put forward by the Estonian ESPN national expert with regard to the role of EU funds (e.g. ESF, ERDF) in partly ensuring the implementation of the Welfare Development Plan activities. Temporary accommodation services for former inmates and homelessness prevention services are two examples of activities strongly financed by EU funding.

- In Croatia, too, the implementation of measures in the existing strategies which partly address HHE relies heavily on EU funding, mainly through support granted to civil society organisations.

- The Italian expert notes that, following the approval of the national Guidelines to Tackle Severe Adult Marginality, a funding line – entirely financed through EU resources –was launched, for the period 2016-2019, with the aim to support homelessness services and initiatives promoted by regional and local authorities.

The Greek experts provide a critical assessment of the important role of EU funding within the overall national context. On the one hand, such funding (e.g. ESF) ensures the operation of most homelessness service provision in Greece; on the other hand, such over-reliance is envisaged as a source of concern, as the "viability of these services will be put into great jeopardy in the event of a reduction, or, even worse, a termination of this major source of funding".

In Hungary, the experts note, although EU funds are comparably smaller and less stable than national funding, they have played a very significant role in funding innovative services, thus addressing a major lack within the national model of financing. Housing First, for example, has been piloted for several years from ESF funds. These projects, however, have not been sustainable, and no follow-up or additional funding was secured, given the overall housing-ready staircase approach prioritising emergency and/or supported temporary accommodation services.

ESPN national experts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia explicitly report the key role played by the European Union in providing substantial funds – through IPA financial assistance – for the implementation of projects targeting the most vulnerable population groups (e.g. return and resettlement programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo; and Roma integration programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia). Moreover, the Serbian expert argues, EU support in the area of HHE has also proved valuable in ensuring the necessary technical support and in enhancing existing capacity building. Both contributions have been key in both ensuring the

necessary implementation of programmes and in fostering the sharing of knowledge and experience from other EU Member States.

2.3.3   The use of EU indicators on housing in strategic approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion

This sub-section summarises the evidence provided by the 35 ESPN national experts regarding the use (if any) of EU indicators on housing (e.g. housing cost overburden, overcrowding, severe housing deprivation, arrears on mortgage or rent payments) [27] as a tool to monitor HHE in existing national/regional strategic approaches to HHE.

Table 8: Use of EU indicators on housing within strategic/non-strategic approaches to HHE

	Use of EU indicators on housing	Specific homelessness strategies		No specific homelessness strategies in place
		National	Regional/ local	
AT	YES		√	
BE	YES		√	
BG	NO			√
CY	NO			√
CZ	NO	√		
DE	YES		√	
DK	NO	√		
EE	NO			√
EL*	NO	√		
ES	NO	√		
FI	NO	√		
FR	NO	√		
HR	NO			√
HU	YES			√
IE	NO	√		
IT	NO	√		
LT	NO			√
LU	YES	√		
LV	NO			√
MT	YES			√
NL	NO	√		
PL	NO			√
PT	NO	√		
RO	YES			√
SE	NO		√	
SI	YES			√
SK	YES		√	
UK	NO		√	

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[27] The aforementioned indicators are available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.

	Use of EU indicators on housing	Specific homelessness strategies		No specific homelessness strategies in place
		National	Regional/ local	
AL	NO			√
BA	NO			√
ME	NO			√
MK	NO			√
RS	YES			√
TR	NO	–	–	
XK	NO			√

Note 1: In those countries where a national strategy exists, possible regional/ local strategies are not included in this table. Yet, this information is available in the individual country reports. This is the case, for instance, of Ireland and the Netherlands.
Note 2: In Sweden and Slovakia, only local strategies are currently in place. In Slovakia, a new comprehensive strategy on homelessness is currently being prepared.
* In Greece, the homelessness national strategy has already been drafted and announced, although it has not yet been issued.
Source: ESPN national reports.

Table 8 shows that **only ten countries (including a non-EU country) use EU indicators on housing** in their approaches to HHE (AT, BE, DE, HU, LU, MT, RO SI, SK as well as RS). In half of these countries, specific strategic national (LU), regional (AT, BE, DE), and local (SK) homelessness strategies are in place. However, there is no evidence of a close link between EU indicators on housing and existing monitoring procedures/mechanisms used to monitor HHE in such strategic approaches. In general, they are used in background studies and statistics, often at national level.

In Germany, for example, where no national homelessness strategy is in place, the ESPN national expert refers to the use of EU indicators on housing for the fifth Report on Poverty and Wealth (2017), used to monitor the housing situation. This report is prepared once per legislative period. The Region of North Rhine-Westphalia – where a homelessness regional strategy is in place (see Sub-section 2.1) – collects regular statistics on homelessness which do not include EU indicators on housing, as these are not relevant to the situations covered by the strategy. In Luxembourg – where a national homelessness strategy is in place – EU indicators on housing cost overburden, overcrowding, severe housing deprivation, arrears on mortgage or rent payments were used only in the study on housing exclusion as a background document to the strategy. No other documents related to the national strategy refer to any of these indicators.

In those countries where no national or regional homelessness strategies are in place, ESPN experts usually mention the use of EU indicators on housing in relation to national strategies on housing (e.g. RO, SI) or to national strategies on poverty reduction and/or on social inclusion (e.g. HU, MT, SK).

In the majority of European countries where the use of EU indicators is not reported, it is important to differentiate between diverse situations:

- Countries where specific homelessness strategies are in place and where there are data collection mechanisms to monitor homelessness. These contain specific indicators reflecting the strategy's objectives, but the EU indicators on housing are not used (e.g. ES, DK, FI, FR, IE, NL, PT, SE, UK).

- Countries where homelessness strategies are in place or are under development but which have not established clear monitoring procedures and therefore there is uncertainty regarding the indicators to be used (e.g. EL, IT).

- Countries (e.g. BG, CY, ME) where EU indicators on housing are not used, due to a lack of monitoring mechanisms or data collection exercises regarding the implementation of wider strategic approaches (e.g. on poverty and social exclusion).

- Countries where ESPN experts do not report any use of EU indicators, because no strategic approaches on homelessness are in place (e.g. LV, MK, PL).

3　NATURE AND PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS SERVICE PROVISION IN EUROPE

This section examines current patterns of service provision for homeless people, based on the analysis provided by the ESPN Country Teams and with reference to the discussion on recent attempts to construct a typology of the range of homelessness services in Europe (Pleace et al. 2018). The section starts by briefly presenting the proposed typology (Sub-section 3.1), followed by a description of the main types of support services provided across Europe (Sub-section 3.2), including a brief discussion of the main approaches which underpin the countries' current responses to HHE. The section then looks at the available evidence on the effectiveness of existing responses at three different levels, i.e. in preventing HHE, in providing access to permanent accommodation solutions, and in providing comprehensive and flexible support (Sub-section 3.3). A description of the main service providers of HHE services as well as their role, followed by the identification of important innovations in the provision of homelessness services in the last 5 years, will be the focus of the following two sub-sections (3.4 and 3.5, respectively). The Section will end by identifying the main systemic causes limiting and/or enhancing effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness across Europe. It gives a summary table with a comparative perspective on the main challenges to be addressed, as well as on the main priorities for improvement identified at the national level (Sub-section 3.6).

3.1　A European framework for the classification of services for homeless people

The attempt to develop a European classification of services for homeless people (Pleace et al. 2018) made by the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH) may constitute a helpful transnational reference definition, enabling us to better understand the diversity of the current patterns of service provision for homeless people across the 35 countries analysed.

This typology recognises the considerable differences between the responses to homelessness in Europe, as well as the diversity of existing interpretations of what a homelessness service may be. These depend notably on the country's definitions of homelessness which, as highlighted in Section 1, may vary considerably.

Thus, the authors argue, any attempt to build a **European typology of homelessness services** must encompass "housing-led, choice orientated, comprehensive and flexible services that recognise housing as a human right", as well as "emergency shelters that offer a bed, a meal and nothing else". (Pleace et al. 2018 21)

The proposed typology is structured around two main questions: a) is the support provided housing-focused, i.e. are services centred on using ordinary housing (e.g. housing-first services), or non-housing-focused, i.e. they are mostly aimed at making someone "housing ready" by providing support and treatment (e.g. shelters and temporary accommodation)?; and b) how intense is the support provided (e.g. a food-distribution service is a low-intensity service, whereas Intensive Case Management (ICM) services, which are provided for people with complex needs are an example of a high intensity service)?

A wide range of different types of services can be identified within this overall framework: emergency shelters, hostels, day centres, street outreach services, floating mobile support, temporary supported housing, Housing-first services, transitional housing, housing-led services, temporary accommodation, specialised health services, tenancy sustainment services, debt counselling support, local letting agencies/housing access schemes, etc.

The diversity of services described by the national experts confirms the existence of such patterns of service provision, which can be roughly classified according to the proposed typology presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: A Proposed Typology of European Homelessness Services
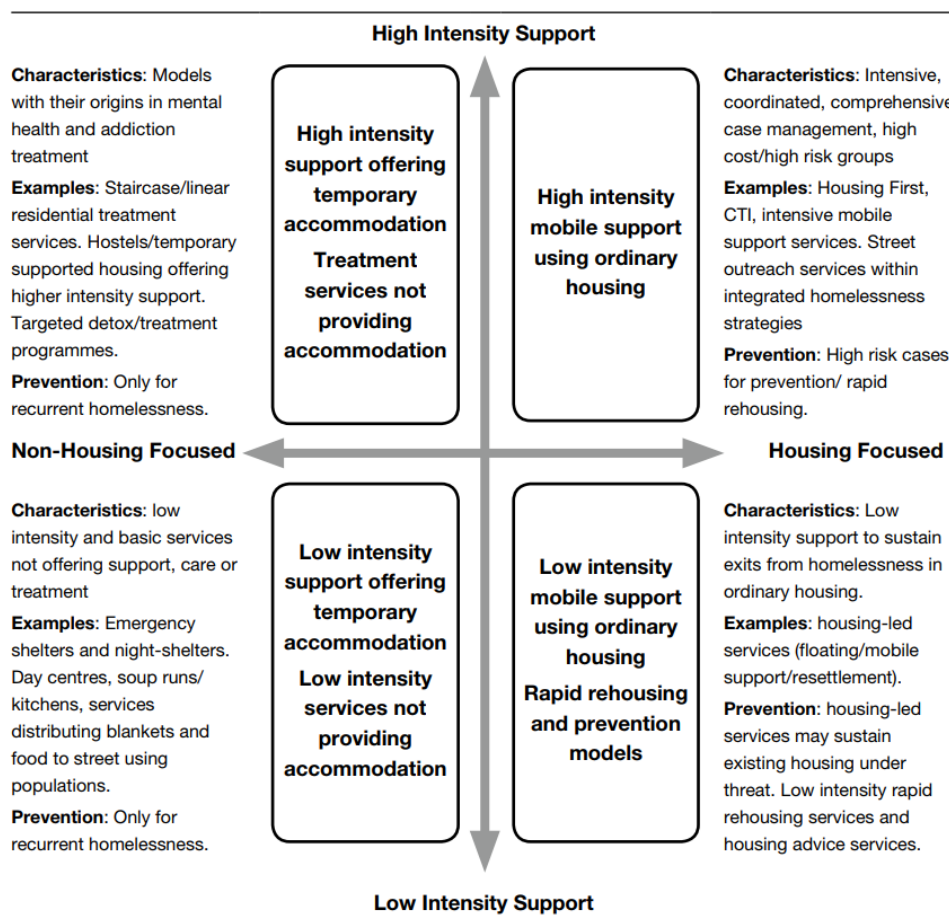
Source: Pleace et al. (2018). Homelessness Services in Europe, FEANTSA, Brussels. Available online.

It is important to highlight that although this typology may be a helpful tool for classifying the main types of homelessness services identified across the 35 countries, it is not intended to provide clear cut positioning of existing homelessness provision, neither between, nor within individual countries. Lower intensity non-housing services are present in countries where housing-led, Housing First services may be highly developed and, at the same time, in countries where there is a predominance of non-housing lower intensity services, Housing First programmes may also be present.

3.2   Main types of support services

3.2.1   Prevailing approaches to homelessness and housing exclusion

Back in 2010, the Jury's recommendations to the European Consensus Conference acknowledged the need to enhance a paradigm shift away from the traditional policy response of "managing homelessness" towards a focus on housing as a human right. More recently, Pleace et al. (2018) recalled the growing body of evidence on a "demonstrably effective response" which can be used

at a strategic level for reducing the risks of "experiencing homelessness" and, particularly, of "experiencing homelessness for any amount of time or on a repeated basis".

The national experts' descriptions of the nature and patterns of homelessness service provision within their countries provide some insights into the prevailing approaches which are currently in place and, in some cases, show the emergence of a shift towards housing-led approaches within the overall provision of homelessness services. In some cases, it is not possible to identify a "shifting trend", but there is evidence of isolated examples of housing-led initiatives (often Housing First projects).

Table 9: Grouping of countries according to the dominant approach in the provision of homelessness services

Predominantly staircase approach	Predominantly staircase approach with evidence of shifting trend
BA, BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, HR, LT, LV, ME, MK, MT, PL, RS, TR	AT, BE, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, SI
Predominantly staircase approach with evidence of small-scale initiatives	**Predominantly housing-led/Housing First approach**
HU*, PT, RO, SE, SK,	AL, DK, FI, UK, XK

The national experts note a trend towards the criminalisation of homelessness, leading in late 2018 to the criminalisation of rough sleeping.
Source: ESPN national reports.

A **staircase model of service provision seems to prevail** in the overwhelming majority of European countries, i.e. in most countries the different types of support aim at assisting homeless people with their needs through different forms of temporary housing support up to the point where they are ready to live independently in their own home. Contrary to Housing First services, housing comes last.

In Latvia, for example, the description of the overall approach to tackling homelessness illustrates the traditional supply of non-housing focused support services, revealing some important frailties of the existing system: "low-intensity services, offering basic non-housing support and emergency accommodation form the bulk of the homelessness service provision in Latvia. The services offered (emergency accommodation) for homeless people are a reactive response to homelessness (neither curative, nor preventive), disorganised (without a strategy) and segmented (not continuous)".

The categorisation provided in Table 9 also shows that in several countries there is **evidence of shifts occurring in service provision**, as more intensive services are provided together with access to permanent accommodation. In Spain, for example, the national expert argues that while the traditional system of shelter provision seems to be in crisis, there is an increasing supply of housing-led services. The Housing First model is making its way to different Autonomous Communities, and the new public strategies, with the impulse and initiative of a growing NGO sector, are replacing the staircase model approach by the Housing First model. Resistance to this evolving trend is apparent, particularly from the managing bodies of shelters and other traditional services.

In other countries, **the staircase model or "continuum of care" is still dominant**, but there is evidence of the introduction of **small-scale Housing First** programmes in the local provision of homelessness services. In Sweden, for example, the introduction of Housing First services is underway in 20 out of the 290 municipalities, and it is defined as "one intervention alongside the ordinary organisation of homelessness support". In practice, the staircase model still prevails.

The countries categorised as having **housing-led/Housing First predominant approaches** are far from a homogeneous group. Denmark, Finland and the UK have housing-focused, housing-led mobile support services at the core of their response to homelessness, and there is a widespread use of this type of service provision. In Albania and Kosovo, the focus of HHE support is on providing housing assistance for vulnerable and low-income groups: displaced persons, returnees, Roma households, and repatriated persons. In Albania, social housing policies are at the core of existing strategies, with a commitment to provide available, accessible, affordable and quality housing solutions to vulnerable and low-income households. In Kosovo, most housing support services are designed to provide permanent accommodation solutions, through the reconstruction, renovation and furnishing of existing houses.

The following sub-section gives a detailed description of the current service provision across Europe, drawing on the analysis provided by the 35 national experts. Emergency and temporary accommodation, non-residential support, Housing First and prevention services will be at the core of the discussion.

3.2.2   Emergency and temporary accommodation

Emergency shelters, overnight shelters, warming-up or winter shelters are widespread services offered in the vast majority of the 35 ESPN countries. These services mostly provide **non-housing low intensity support** covering emergency and basic needs of homeless people, usually for a short period of time. These services are often concentrated in the bigger cities, operated either by NGOs and/or municipalities.

Table 10: Grouping of countries according to the main types of emergency accommodation

Overnight shelters/shelters	Winter shelters or winter actions	Refuges
AL, AT, BA, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK	AT, BA, EL, FR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MK, PL, PT, TR	AT, CY, DK, EL, LU, NL, SI, UK, XK
Hostels/hotels	**Other services**	
FR, IE, PT	CY*, DK**, XK***	

*Shelters for victims of human trafficking; **Shelters for young people escaping honour related conflicts; ***Shelters for repatriated persons.*
Source: ESPN national reports.

The use of **shelters and overnight shelters is reported by all the 35 countries**, although in the case of Kosovo, emergency accommodation is mainly restricted to those categories which are entitled to receive housing assistance – no official definition of homelessness is used in the country – namely repatriated persons (forced return migrants) and women escaping domestic violence.

A description of the emergency services available in the various countries reveals significant differences in service delivery. The use of basic shared accommodation and low-intensity support is reported in a significant number of countries (e.g. AT, BE, CZ, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, MK, PT, BA, RO, RS). Here the typical offer includes bedrooms and shared living rooms or dormitories, meals, personal hygiene facilities and, in some cases, information, social and psychological counselling. These services are often run in single-site buildings with on-site support staff. The provision of these emergency services may involve the payment of a fee (e.g. CZ, IE).

On the other hand, in some countries, such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and the UK, national experts also report the provision of more intensive support and/or higher standard facilities within emergency responses (see Box 2).

Box 2: Country examples of differentiated types of emergency support services

*In Vienna, **Austria**, alongside the more traditional provision of emergency shelters offering non-housing focused low intensity support, the three main existing emergency shelters have opened up new facilities called "Chance Houses", where some medium-intensity support is also available and which are not closed during the daytime.*

*In **Denmark**, the provision of emergency and temporary accommodation is regulated under §110 of the Social Services law, which obliges municipalities to offer homeless people temporary accommodation, activation support, care and subsequent services. §110 homeless hostels and outreach programmes such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Critical Time Intervention (CTI), or Intensive Case Management (ICM) are offered by various municipalities across the country. The duration of stay in these facilities may vary from just one night to several months.*

*In **Germany**, although a large proportion of homeless people are housed in communal housing (e.g. emergency and homelessness shelters), some people who have lost their homes are provided with normal flats but without a rental contract. Households with children are also offered regular accommodation.*

*In **Ireland,** Family Hubs have been set up in recent years as an attempt to replace the use of hotel and B&B accommodation, which has been considered inappropriate to the needs of families with children. The Hubs are a form of co-location and collective living, with common facilities and services and more private bedroom accommodation. The system aims at providing emergency accommodation that offers greater stability and facilitates more coordinated needs assessment.*

*In the **UK**, emergency and temporary accommodation provided by NGOs and supported financially by local authorities may include shared or non-self-contained accommodation with support and floating support services. Even at the lower end of this formalised type of service provision, homeless people are offered basic support for resettlement and support with access to treatment/care (if needed).*

Source: ESPN national reports.

Another important finding from the descriptions of emergency services across the 35 countries is the presence of a **wide variation of services within countries**, with this type of emergency support largely overrepresented in bigger cities. For example:

- In Austria, the extent and mix of services varies greatly across the federal provinces. Although most emergency responses are non-housing-focused services providing low-intensity support, there are also examples of services taking a housing-focused medium to high-intensity approach.

- In Belgium, for example, the majority of emergency accommodation in the country is concentrated in the Brussels Capital Region, providing low-intensity support services.

- In Germany, homeless people have a right to be provided with emergency accommodation by the municipality in which they are currently staying. Although municipalities are required to meet a set of minimum standards with regard to ensuring "human dignity", a lack of uniform or binding standards results in considerable variation in what is on offer in the different municipalities. Nevertheless, such diversity exists within an overall municipal system for preventing and overcoming HHE.

- In the Netherlands, municipalities are legally required to accept all people asking for shelter, but there may be considerable differences between services offered in different municipalities. After the initial needs' assessment, the shelter may refer the person to another municipality in a better position to offer more adequate support.

- In Sweden, too, there is a wide variation of services provided across the 290 municipalities. A few night shelters have direct access from the streets (with a queueing system), although the majority operate on a referral basis. Smaller towns and municipalities often have to buy services from other municipalities given their lower range of available services.

In several countries (see Table 10), national experts report the provision of additional overnight places which are made available during winter, usually between November and April. In general, this **additional winter support** is confined to main cities and includes either the opening of additional facilities or the provision of additional beds in existing facilities. The main objective of this additional emergency shelter provision is to provide basic emergency accommodation and support. In countries, where access to shelter provision is restricted, for example, on the grounds of citizenship or of legal residence (e.g. AT and SE), winter support services may be accessed without restrictions.

The use of **hotels and/or hostels** as an additional form of emergency accommodation for both homeless individuals and families is reported specifically by three national experts (see Table 10). In France the reliance on low-threshold hotels, where rooms have no kitchen or no specific area for preparing meals, has been reported as a serious concern affecting both single individuals and families with children. This situation is particularly serious in and around Paris, where families can end up in one single room for several years, as there are serious problems in finding housing to move people into from these premises. Like France, the Irish expert reports the extensive use of hotels/B&Bs and hostels to accommodate families. In May 2017 around 600 families were being housed in emergency hotel accommodation and a further 50 in Bed & Breakfasts. In both countries there is evidence of plans to limit the use of such facilities for providing emergency accommodation to homeless people, particularly to homeless families. In France, the ESPN national expert reports that a three-year plan to reduce the use of hotel stays, which has been on the rise for several years, has at best led to stagnation in that rising trend. In 2016-17 the Irish government identified the use of hotels and Bed & Breakfasts as an inappropriate response to family homelessness; it was targeted for elimination and is currently being widely replaced by the use of Family Hubs (see Box 2).

The use of **specialised emergency services (refuges)** for women and children escaping domestic violence is explicitly reported by several national experts as one category of emergency accommodation (see Table 10). These services are provided for people who are in immediate and urgent need of a safe place to stay as a result of a crisis situation. This specific type of service is present in a much wider range of countries across Europe than those indicated in Table 10. This apparent paradox can be explained mainly by two factors: on the one hand, women escaping domestic violence are not defined as homeless in the majority of countries (see Section 1) and therefore services addressing their needs have not been reported; on the other hand, in many countries refuge services are often operated as a separate system of specialised services, meaning that they are not recorded as homeless services. In Cyprus, for example, victims of domestic violence and human trafficking are reported as particularly vulnerable groups whose needs (including the urgent need for accommodation) are addressed through separate initiatives which are mostly organised by NGOs.

ESPN experts in Cyprus, Denmark and Kosovo report the existence of emergency accommodation services targeting specific groups of homeless population, i.e. victims of human trafficking, young people escaping honour-related conflicts and repatriated persons.

- In Cyprus, a specific shelter has been set up for female emergency accommodation services.

- In Denmark there are four refuges for women and men who have been exposed to violence, including two for young people on the run from honour related conflicts.

- In Kosovo, where victims of domestic violence and repatriated persons are defined as homeless, the expert highlights the fact that the provision of temporary accommodation

is "limited to shelters for victims of domestic violence and to the Accommodation Centre for repatriated 'persons'".

There is no clear distinction made between emergency and temporary accommodation in many of the national analyses produced by ESPN experts. In several countries (e.g. BG, CY, DK, EE, EL, IE, IT, LV, PL, PT, SI, SK), many services provide accommodation that is both for emergencies and/or temporary. Additionally, the use of the terms "emergency" and "temporary" in different national contexts often seems to refer to the same kinds of services.

Table 11 is an attempt to summarise the **main types of temporary accommodation services** identified across the 35 countries, and to produce a tentative classification of the nature of such services using the EOH typology presented in Sub-section 3.1.

Table 11: Main types of temporary accommodation

	Types of services provided	**Typology of services**
AT	Transitional housing	Medium-intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused
BE	Shelters of Centres for General Social Welfare (CAW); Temporary stays in Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW) housing	Medium-intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
BG	Temporary accommodation centres (up to 3 months)	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
CY	Temporary accommodation centres (to be implemented)	Medium intensity non-housing focused support
CZ	Asylum houses; half-way houses; supported housing	Medium-intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
DE	Transitional housing; hostels	Medium to high intensity housing focused support; some non-housing focused support
DK	Transitional housing; hostels	Medium to high intensity housing focused support; some non-housing focused support
EE	Shelters; provision of dwelling; safe house service	Low to medium non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
EL	Transitional accommodation hostels;	Low to medium non-housing focused support
ES	Reception Centres; transitional housing	Low to medium non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
FI	Supported housing	High intensity housing focused support
FR	Housing and social reinsertion centres (CHRS); social residences; half-way houses; boarding houses;	Medium to high intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
HR	Shelters	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
HU	Temporary hostels; rehabilitation institutions; temporary accommodation for families with children	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
IE	Supported temporary accommodation; transitional housing; Family Hubs	Medium intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
IT	Temporary accommodation; transitional supported housing	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support; some intensive housing-focused support in specific municipalities (or geographical areas)
LT	Shelters; crisis centres	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
LU	Hostels; temporary accommodation; transitional supported accommodation	Medium intensity non-housing focused support; low to medium intensity housing-focused support

	Types of services provided	Typology of services
LV	Shelters; social care beds	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
MT	Shelters	Medium intensity non-housing focused support
NL	Assisted housing; protected housing; crisis shelters	Medium to high intensity housing focused support; some non-housing focused support
PL	Homes for mothers with children under 18; crisis intervention centres; sheltered dwellings; shelters which allow stays up to 6 months	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
PT	Temporary accommodation centres; transitional accommodation	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
RO	Assistance and social reintegration residential centres; refuge services; Residential centres for young people	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
SE	Transitional housing; hotels; hostels; "secondary housing market"	Medium to high intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
SI	Transitional supported accommodation; refuge services; crisis centres	Medium intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
SK	Hostels; half-way homes; refuge services	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
UK	Temporary accommodation; supported housing; refuge services	Medium to high intensity non-housing focused support; some housing focused support
AL	Residential shelters	Low to medium intensity non-housing focused support
BA	Shelters; collective centres	Low intensity non-housing focused support
ME	Shelter	Low intensity non-housing focused support
MK	Shelters; supported accommodation	Low intensity non-housing focused support
RS	Shelters; refuge services	Low intensity non-housing focused support
TR	Shelters; refuge services; orphanages	Low intensity non-housing focused support
XK	Accommodation centre for repatriated persons	Low intensity non-housing focused support

Source: ESPN national reports.

Most temporary accommodation for homeless people across Europe provides non-housing focused support, i.e. it does not use ordinary housing but, rather, communal, supported accommodation. This type of non-housing focused service is present in 34 out of the 35 countries surveyed.

Only Finland is described by the ESPN expert as providing temporary accommodation services using ordinary housing and high-intensity support. The core philosophy of the Housing First model adopted in Finland since 2008, i.e. a home rather than temporary accommodation, as a human right, has resulted in priority being given to this housing-focused approach in the provision of services for homeless people. The Housing First paradigm states that when addressing the various problems faced by homeless people, the first support measure should always be the provision of housing. A dwelling is a precondition for solving other problems, and hence housing is always the top priority. Provision of housing is therefore not conditional on behaving in a certain way, nor is retaining housing.

Housing-focused support services are, to a greater or lesser extent, also present in a considerable number of countries apart from Finland (e.g. AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI). However, the extent of these services, as well as the type of support provided, varies significantly not only between countries but also within individual countries. For instance:

- In Italy, where municipalities are responsible for planning, managing and delivering services and interventions aimed at tackling severe marginality, the system of service provision varies greatly at local level. More traditional approaches providing emergency and/or temporary accommodation still prevail, although housing-led programmes and high-intensity support services are increasingly being adopted in different cities and regions.

- In Austria as well, most services offer non-housing focused low intensity support. However, some cities and federal provinces have introduced housing focused medium to high intensity support services.

- In Germany – where the "specialist centre for the prevention of homelessness" is the main focus in the municipal system for preventing and tackling homelessness – municipalities and other stakeholders (e.g. charitable welfare organisations) have an explicit emphasis on preventing evictions and on finding temporary accommodation in alternative housing. For people unable to cope with their housing problems without additional help, personal tailored support is offered in line with existing needs.

In a large number of countries (17), housing-focused support is available alongside other forms of temporary accommodation. The latter mostly involves the use of communal, shared facilities which may provide different types of support services, i.e. from low to medium and high intensity support. Hostels, shelters, temporary accommodation centres, collective centres, half-way homes, social residences and reception centres are some examples of the variety of temporary accommodation services which have been identified all over Europe. The **geographical distribution** of this pattern of temporary accommodation services is not confined to any single group of countries: it is present both in North-Western countries (e.g. BE, DE, FR, IE, SE, UK), in the South (e.g. ES, IT, PT) and in the East (e.g. CZ, PL, SI). Nevertheless, housing-focused temporary accommodation responses to homeless people are still not present in most of the countries surveyed. For example:

- In Czechia, there are different types of temporary accommodation services. They include asylum houses (homeless hostels) where individuals and families can stay for up to one year, usually in their own rooms. The support relationship between clients and social workers is set out in an individual plan. In the so-called "crisis intervention accommodation", support is provided to persons whose health or life is at risk, including the provision of meals, social and therapeutic services and support in ensuring access to rights.

- In Poland, sheltered training dwellings (*mieszkania chronione treningowe*) are used as training facilities during the transitional stage between shelters and standard housing, as part of a staircase or housing-ready approach. The individuals housed there have no tenancy protection. These dwellings have minimum standards for operation and are mainly provided by public authorities.

However, within this large group there are also a few examples of countries (e.g. DE, DK, FR, NL, SE, UK) with services providing **relatively intensive support within the so-called non-housing focused approach**.

- In Denmark, §110 institutions include homeless hostels and transitional homes. They provide support to homeless people in different areas, e.g. dealing with economic matters, searching for housing, housing training, and accompanying people to medical appointments or to municipal services. Social and employment related support is also available, such as workshops, maintenance and cleaning. In some, move-on support to an individual home is also provided.

- A wide array of different types of temporary accommodation is available for homeless people in France. Housing and social reinsertion centres (*Centres d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale*, CHRS), for example, provide temporary support in rooms or scattered accommodation for single people and families. These centres offer support services tailored to people's needs, to foster their socioeconomic reintegration and personal and social independence. Admission is for a set, renewable period (usually six months) based on a regular personal assessment.

- In the UK, local authorities, housing associations and NGOs provide supported housing – including shared or non-self-contained accommodation – with support and floating support services, including high-intensity specialised support for people with special needs.

In another large group of countries (17), temporary accommodation support is restricted to non-housing support. Such is the case of most countries across Eastern and South Eastern Europe, including all the **non-EU countries** (AL, BA, ME, MK, RS, TR, XK). The provision of **low-intensity support services is also predominant** across this latter group of countries, where temporary accommodation is often described as a source of support for specific vulnerable groups of people identified as homeless.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Centres for Social Work (CSWs) are responsible for providing temporary accommodation for people who are without shelter or housing. In a few municipalities, facilities are available in communal settings which provide for the basic needs of clients. A particularly serious situation reported by the national expert regards internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees – whose displacement was caused by the war – and who are living in collective centres. These are typically former schools and garrisons, former workers' barracks or similar accommodation, usually in a run-down state and providing very poor living conditions.

- In North Macedonia, temporary accommodation is provided in the Centre for the Homeless – *Cicino Selo* – which is a communal centre offering rooms for single individuals and families with children. The national expert reports problems with the operational capacity of the centre (e.g. insufficient supply of food, low levels of hygiene and personal safety). A pilot programme initiated in 2017 by the Government aims at providing supported living to families formerly residing in improvised housing, the majority of whom were Roma families.

- In Turkey, mostly in Istanbul, several shelters run by NGOs provide temporary accommodation and basic services. Orphanages for children and refuges for women escaping domestic violence also provide non-housing focused temporary support.

- In Albania, the national expert reports the existence of different types of temporary shelter services run by NGOs which are available to different categories of people

according to their needs. Although struggling with financial difficulties, this sector has been trying to introduce new services and models of service delivery in an attempt to shift away from the traditional institutionalisation model of public services.

In Cyprus, Greece and Malta, temporary accommodation is also restricted to the provision of non-housing focused services.

- In Cyprus, several shelters provide temporary and/or emergency accommodation and basic support to vulnerable groups within a fragmented system of provision. New responses in this area are expected to be in operation during 2019, aiming to provide more extensive and tailored support as part of a non-housing focused approach.

- In Greece, temporary accommodation for homeless people is provided by Transitional Accommodation Hostels which offer free-of-charge transitional accommodation (usually for a period of time up to six months), catering mostly for basic needs and also providing psychosocial support and referral services.

- In Malta, the government is directly involved in the provision of temporary accommodation, along with private partners (YMCA and *Fondazzjoni Dar it-Tama*). Shelters for individuals and families are run by these organisations, providing temporary accommodation and extended programmes aimed at assisting clients to move out of homelessness through a series of "developmental stages" in a housing-ready approach.

3.2.3   Non-residential support services

Non-residential support services for homeless people **are widely available across Europe**. It is important to highlight that not all existing services are available within individual countries, particularly because some of the more basic types of service (e.g. food and clothes distribution) may be provided by a wide range of different organisations (usually NGOs and charitable organisations) and sometimes even by individuals. In other cases, the national description of homelessness services provided focuses on the main services available within the overall approach, rather than giving a detailed description of all the different types of assistance on offer to homeless people.

Help and assistance in the form of **day centres, outreach support and access to food are the most common types of non-residential support** identified by national experts (see Table 12). These services are, thus, an important element of service provision in the majority of countries, although their importance within the overall non-residential support provided may vary substantially.

On the other hand, **healthcare services (**either basic or more specialised healthcare) and floating mobile support provided as part of Housing First and housing-led services are available in a **more restricted number of countries** (see Table 12). Nevertheless, even in countries where more specialised and high-intensity non-residential support services are available, low-intensity support such as food distribution or social canteens are still present.

Table 12: Grouping of countries according to the main types of non-residential services reported

Day centres	Outreach services/teams	Housing-led mobile support
AT, BE, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK, AL, RS	BE, BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK	AT, BE, CZ, DK, FR, FI, IE, IT, NL, PT, SE, UK
Healthcare services	**Food distribution**	**Other services**
AT, BE, BG, DK, EL, FI, FR, HU, LU, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK	AT, BE, BG, CZ EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK, UK, ME, TR	CZ, DE, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, UK, MK, RO, SI, SK

Source: ESPN national reports.

In several countries (e.g. AL, EE, LT, LV, ME, MT, TR), day centres, outreach and/or food support are the only available types of non-residential support reported by national experts. Often, the descriptions of these services suggest a focus on more basic types of support, such as distribution of food, clothes and other basic goods, or centres providing access to meals, to personal hygiene facilities, clothing, leisure activities and laundry services. In some cases, however, more comprehensive and specialised support may also be available.

- In Estonia, for example, the Tallinn day centre offers social counselling, food, showers, soap, second-hand clothes, books, magazines, TV and Internet, whereas the Tartu Day Centre also provides support with job vacancies, and re-training.

- In Montenegro, Croatia and Turkey, the only non-residential services available are the public kitchens run by municipalities (ME and HR) and assistance with food and clothing (TR).

- In Slovakia, the outreach team was established as a structural unit of the Riga Shelter and aims at providing information and support to the homeless.

- In Malta, one of the shelters provides a drop-in midday meal also accessible to non-residents.

Day centres may provide various services, ranging from basic assistance to more specialised support, including access to counselling, psychological and professional integration support, training activities, and healthcare.

- In Czechia, low-threshold day centres – mostly run by churches and NGOs – provide hygiene facilities, food, and support in enforcing individual rights.

- Similarly, in Greece and Hungary, day centres for homeless people provide free-of-charge services aimed at covering the basic daily needs of homeless people.

- In Latvia, the Riga Shelter day centre provides additional support activities aimed at the development of working skills, access to self-help groups, access to primary healthcare support, and social rehabilitation services.

- In the UK, day centres are currently more likely to offer an array of services, including advice and support with benefits and housing, education, training and support with seeking work, and health services.

Food distribution services are present in a large number of countries, usually with voluntary, charitable organisations and NGOs actively offering food, clothes, and other help to people living rough. Distribution of food and/or meals may also take place through social kitchens, social

canteens and other fixed-site facilities. Food distribution services may be confined to certain territories – usually larger cities – or, in other cases, they may constitute mainstream practices.

- In Belgium, in the Walloon Region, the Social Links (*Relais Sociaux*) are active in the major urban areas providing emergency social services. Although the types of support vary, food distribution takes place in the four major cities (i.e. Liège, Mons, Charleroi, Namur).

- In Italy, according to the 2014 Survey on homeless people, 89% of homeless people had used canteens, 61% had benefited from the distribution of clothing, 40% of medicines and 35% of food.

Outreach services/outreach teams, focusing on establishing contact with people sleeping rough and on connecting them with other services, were identified in several countries (e.g. FR, EL, PT, LV); like food distribution services, they tend to operate in major urban areas. Yet, within the same country (and the same cities) other outreach teams may have a stronger focus on immediate survival needs.

- In Portugal, there are two major types of street outreach teams: those operated by volunteers which provide basic goods (e.g. food and clothes), usually operating during the night; and multidisciplinary professional teams who have expertise in different support systems (e.g. social welfare, justice, health, housing) and try to connect people with support and resettlement services; these usually operate during the day, on a daily basis.

- In most French cities, according to the Paris *Samu Social* emergency services, social street patrols provide emotional support, distribute hot and cold drinks, food and sometimes clothes, blankets, sleeping bags and toiletries, etc. The *Samu Social* teams also provide information on the shelter solutions available.

Healthcare services for homeless people have been identified in thirteen out of the 35 countries. These services may be provided within existing facilities (e.g. day centres or shelters) or take the form of more or less specialised mobile care services used to reach people who do not – or cannot – access mainstream healthcare services.

- In Austria, for example, medical services for homeless people play an important role. Although health insurance coverage is generally very high in Austria, the healthcare needs of homeless people not covered by health insurance and people without Austrian citizenship are not met by the normal healthcare system. NGOs and charitable hospitals thus provide ambulatory healthcare to these patients. These services are usually only available in the major urban centres.

- In Greece, a number of specialised mobile units and outreach teams focus exclusively on the provision of primary healthcare and immediate emergency treatment for homeless people with drug addictions.

- In Hungary, healthcare centres can be set up to provide general practitioner healthcare services to homeless people for 30 hours a week and are open to any patient, irrespective of their residence; 24-hour health centres and mobile health units are also available.

- In the Netherlands, most of the largest municipalities provide some type of healthcare service, i.e. a nurse and/or a general practitioner (GP) are available once a week to support homeless people in need of some type of medical care.

- In Slovenia, healthcare professionals provide healthcare assistance to homeless people without health insurance, through outreach work, in day care centres and through pro bono healthcare services.

- In Belgium, mobile healthcare services for homeless people are provided by Doctors of the World.

- In France, mobile psychiatric teams (*Equipes Mobiles Psychiatrie-Précarité*, EMPP) operate outside hospital facilities providing healthcare support to homeless people, among other vulnerable groups.

Housing-led mobile support is mostly available in countries with Housing First or other forms of housing-led approaches (see Table 12). In some countries (e.g. DK, NL, FI, UK), this type of floating support is at the core of the overall response to homelessness, whereas in others (e.g. CZ, IE, IT, PT), such services are present but represent a rather minority approach within the overall service provision. Different examples of this type of non-residential service include: floating mobile support provided to people living in their own homes who have specific psychosocial needs, to homeless people housed under Housing First programmes, or to homeless people moving out of emergency or temporary accommodation into permanent housing.

- In the Netherlands, assisted housing (*begeleid wonen)* is provided by care organisations and NGOs under contract with municipalities. It is targeted at people who are able to live independently in their own home, but who still need some support. They receive ambulatory support (*woonbegeleiding)* from a social worker who visits their house and helps them with daily support needs, such as managing their administration and finances, social interaction with neighbours, finding employment or daytime activities and dealing with mail.

- In Denmark, homelessness has been widely understood as a consequence of both housing and social problems, and since 2009 the Danish homeless strategy has adopted a Housing First approach and the use of intensive home support methods, especially Critical Time Intervention (CTI), Intensive Case Management (ICM) and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) These are all anchored in the housing packages offered by municipalities and institutions to homeless people.

- In England, from 2003 to 2009, "Supporting People" was a specific central government fund for local authorities, enabling them to provide or commission housing with support or floating support services for people with special needs, including ex-homeless people and people vulnerable due to age, disabilities, or substance problems. The term "supporting people" is still used, even though there is no long a ring-fenced funding scheme.

In a few countries (see Table 12), national experts highlight the presence of other **non-residential support services**, namely those **addressing specific groups of homeless people or specific types of intervention**.

- In Czechia, social activation services for families with children aim at enhancing social relationships, at providing social and therapeutic activities, support with everyday management of personal affairs and with the enforcement of individual rights.

- In Romania, information and coordination day centres for street children – under the responsibility of local authorities – aim to provide tailored social services to street children.

- In Germany, charitable service agencies for homeless people provide walk-in counselling centres and specialist counselling centres for housing emergencies which are geared towards preventive support, in close cooperation with local authorities.

3.2.4   Housing First services

In 20 out of the 28 EU countries, experts report programmes, projects or overall strategic approaches based on the Housing First model (see Figure 5). The Housing First model is broadly based on the principle that homelessness is best prevented and stopped by providing people with suitable housing and mobile support according to their needs, rather than trying to make them "housing ready" first. Thus, the first support measure should always be the provision of housing. All the Housing First services identified across the different countries are intended for homeless people with high and complex needs.

Figure 5: Reported presence of Housing First services in Europe
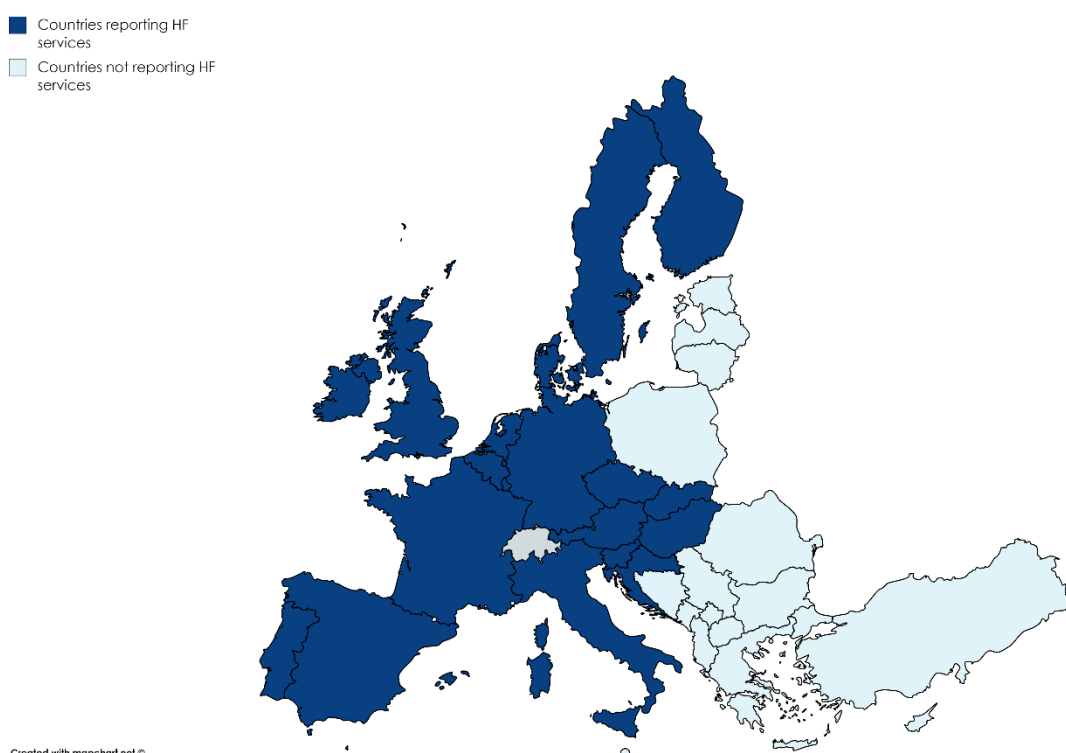
Source: ESPN national reports.

Although **present in most EU Member States**, Housing First may not be considered a very widespread form of homelessness service provision in Europe. In fact, based on the information provided by the national experts, it is possible to identify **significant differences in the process of development of Housing First** across the different European countries. One immediate obvious finding is the absence of any type of Housing First service development in any of the seven ESPN non-EU countries. Additionally, the geographical distribution of Housing First services shows greater coverage across Western Europe, and part of Northern and Southern Europe. Housing First is clearly less common in Eastern European countries.

In only a few countries, **Housing First services** are described by ESPN experts as either already established as an **integral part of homelessness policies** (e.g. BE, DK, FI, FR, LU, NL) or as increasing quickly and restructuring the traditional approach to homelessness (e.g. AT).

- In recent years, Belgian authorities have increasingly invested in more structural solutions to tackle HHE, extending the reach of the Housing First model, which is now present in seven different cities. While cities have flexibility to decide how Housing First should operate, some general principles must be applied. The basic tenet is that Housing First works well by housing the long-term chronically homeless who have severe needs. However, the Belgian experts argue that the mainstreaming of Housing First services is currently being hindered somewhat by uncertain funding prospects.

- Housing First is at the core of the Danish Homeless Strategy. Overall, municipalities organise their Housing First approach around two main models: one model links housing support to an accommodation offer for the homeless: so-called §110 institutions. The other model is to anchor the support in the municipality, typically in a unit or centre for socially vulnerable persons.

- In Finland, the whole system is based on the Housing First principle. The Finnish version of the Housing First principle was described in the 2016 report *Nimi ovessa* [Name on the door]. The two National Action Plans (PAAVO I 2008-2015 and PAAVO II 2012-2015) were aimed at reducing long-term homelessness; they have managed to standardise the Housing First principle and shelters have been replaced by rental housing units.

- In 2010, the Viennese city government decided on a restructuring process for its homelessness services. Housing First projects were launched, leading to a shift from lower intensity housing-focused support services to a housing-led approach. In Graz and Salzburg, Housing First Programmes are increasingly being implemented, and a related approach has been adopted in the province of Voralberg, focusing on providing direct access to social housing and outreach support to homeless people with high support needs.

In Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK, ESPN experts provide evidence of a **significant increase in the implementation of Housing First programmes**.

- In Ireland, Dublin Housing First – set up in 2011 as a Demonstration Project – is being rolled out nationally since last year.

- In Spain, local authorities are increasingly adopting the Housing First approach, and the offer of Housing First services is being expanded into different Autonomous Communities, through a strong drive from Third Sector organisations.

- This strong drive from NGOs is also highlighted by the Italian experts, particularly through the role played by the Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People ('fio.PSD'), which helped set up the "Network Housing First Italia" (NHFI) in March 2014.

- In Sweden, Housing First initiatives have been implemented for the last decade, but although the scaling up of Housing First is evident in cities like Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö and Helsingborg, progress has been slow in recent years.

In several other countries (e.g. CZ, DE, HR, HU, PT, SI, SK), the implementation of Housing First programmes has mostly been restricted to a **limited number of projects**, with differences in scale and provision.

- In Czechia, the project Pilot Testing of Rapid Re-Housing of Families with Children (2016–2018) was implemented by the Brno municipality. Housing First solutions exist only as pilot projects with a very limited scope; yet, in January 2019, a CZK 150 million (€6 million) call was announced, to support the expansion of Housing First projects.

- In Croatia, the city of Zagreb introduced small scale Housing First projects.

- Like Czechia, Hungary has also piloted Housing First projects with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF). These projects have been developed on a very limited scale, and no follow-up or sustainability has been ensured.

- The Housing First approach seems to be one of the pillars of Bratislava's strategy, and there are plans to test a Housing First programme as part of the Trnava strategy.

- In Portugal, the first Housing First programme was established in Lisbon in 2009. Although there is growing interest from several municipalities in adopting the Housing First approach, the dissemination of the model has been slow.

- In Germany, individual *Bundesländer* such as North Rhine-Westphalia have financially supported the implementation of Housing First approaches through regional programmes; but, overall, the spread of Housing First initiatives is still limited in the country.

3.2.5   Prevention services

From an evidence-based perspective, preventing homelessness should be at the core of homelessness strategies and policies. Studies have shown that homelessness prevention is a cost-effective strategy (Pleace and Culhane 2016). It reduces the financial cost of homelessness but, more importantly, it mitigates the real cost of homelessness: the harm it does to human life, damaging people's health, wellbeing and reducing their life chances.

The evidence provided by the national experts reveals the **existence of a wide range of preventative services, but a paucity of integrated and comprehensive systems** combining housing advice, mediation and support services, as well as specialised support targeted at specific high-need groups.

An analysis of the situation across Europe (see Figure 6) reveals the following overall pattern: five countries (BA, BG, ME, MK, TR, XK) report a lack of any type of prevention services, whereas in 15 countries (AL, CY, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SK) only very limited provision is available. Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland and Slovakia report certain preventative measures which cannot be considered as extensive mechanisms, whereas in nine countries (AT, BE, DE, DK, FI, NL, SE, SI, UK) national experts describe more elaborate and comprehensive systems for preventing homelessness.

Figure 6: Provision of services preventing homelessness in Europe
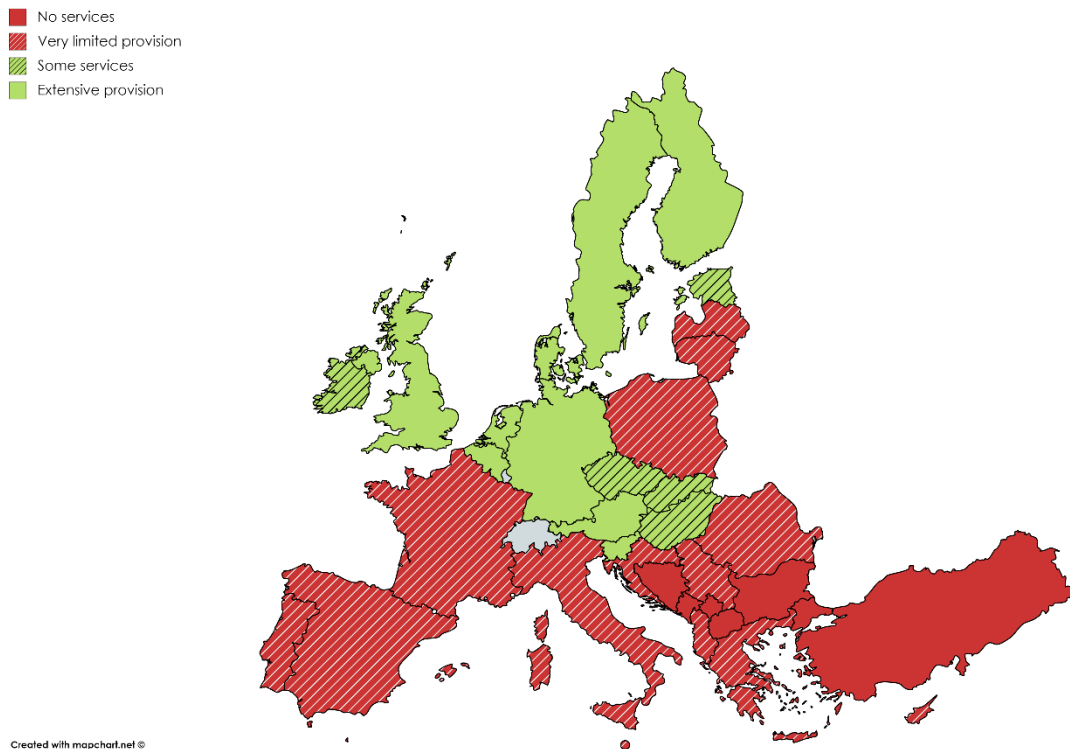
Source: ESPN national reports.

This rough categorisation should be interpreted with a degree of caution, not only since it is based on the information provided in the national reports, but also given the variety of characteristics of the reported preventative measures, services and systems.

Among the countries offering more extensive provision of preventative services, Germany, for example, describes the presence of "specialist centres for the prevention of homelessness" as the main conceptual element in the municipal system for preventing and overcoming HHE. According to the expert, each municipality should have an overall local housing policy plan that includes prevention and provision of emergency housing support, the aim of which is to provide adequate assistance for all persons in precarious housing conditions. Slovenia reports the presence of relatively well developed, effective and efficient primary prevention mechanisms based on cash social assistance and other benefits, as well as more targeted eviction prevention programmes implemented in the cities of Ljubljana and Maribor.

In another group of countries, there is evidence of a very limited presence of prevention measures. These include countries where only very targeted and limited measures are in place, and cases where even these few limited measures are not fully operational.

- Greece, for example, reports the existence of a network of centres and offices for information and support to overindebted borrowers, including those at high risk of homelessness. Out of the planned 120 units which should provide prevention and support services, only 35 have actually been established and are currently operating.

- Like Greece, France reports insufficient development of prevention mechanisms. While according to the normative procedures, moreover, any individual or collective eviction should be followed by a rehousing proposal, in reality, such procedures are not being implemented in many situations.

A more detailed analysis of the provision of preventative services identified by the national experts shows the presence of the following types of services:

- Eviction detection mechanisms (e.g. BE, DE, NL, SE);

- Conflict mediation support (e.g. AT, CZ, NL, UK);

- Debt counselling (e.g. CZ, EE, EL, FI, SE);

- Legal and/or housing advice (e.g. AT, CZ, FI, NL, SK, UK);

- Support with rent arrears and/or other type of financial support (e.g. AT, DE, FI, HU, IT, PT, SI, SK);

- Legal protection mechanisms (e.g. EL, HU, IT, PT)

- Tenancy sustainment support (e.g. DK, IE, UK)

- Prioritised access to housing/rapid rehousing (e.g. DE, DK, FI, SK, UK)

- Resettlement services (e.g. DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, LU, SK)

Eviction detection mechanisms aim at the early detection of risk situations, i.e. the issuing of eviction orders by courts, triggering alert procedures involving cooperation between different stakeholders. In Belgium, for example, a targeted prevention mechanism is in place, i.e. the *federal* law on the "humanising of judicial eviction" determines that all Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW) have to be informed by the court of all eviction procedures in order to be able to provide support. Thus, the court informs the PCSWs when landlords request an eviction, and those clients who are already known to the services are contacted directly by a social worker. Unknown clients receive a letter inviting them to come to the service for a first meeting.

Conflict mediation support and **debt counselling** are reported by several experts. These often consist of local municipal offices, social welfare offices and NGOs offering support in negotiations with landlords, and assisting those individuals and households whose debts might result in homelessness. In Czechia, these housing advice services are provided to people at risk of losing their home, mainly by municipal social workers, churches, NGOs and also by the employment offices responsible for managing the minimum income scheme.

In some countries, **financial support** may be granted to avert the threat of homelessness. Yet, the situations reported by several national experts describing the presence of such mechanisms vary hugely. In Hungary and Portugal, for example, this support is not compulsory or wide ranging. In both cases, it is offered by only some municipalities, and the amount provided only covers part of any housing related debts. Germany, on the other hand, reports the existence of a legal mechanism aimed at assisting households to secure accommodation: the payment of rent arrears is the most important financial benefit granted under social law to avert the threat of homelessness. This assistance is granted in order to avert enforcement of an extraordinary notice of rental termination by the landlord. The assistance is to be granted insofar as it is "justified and necessary and otherwise homelessness threatens to occur" (§ 36 Social Code Book XII).

Legal protection mechanisms are also in place in several other countries, but they tend to focus on very specific groups of people and were implemented in response to crisis situations. Such is the case in Greece, Hungary and Portugal, which, in the mid-2010s, established time-limited

mechanisms to protect primary residences against foreclosure due to households' indebtedness; this was done in response to the consequences of the financial crisis. In Hungary, for example, the National Asset Management Company (128/2012 Government Decree) is part of the Action Plan for the Protection of the Home, and protects mortgage debtors by providing permanent housing solutions to families who struggle paying their mortgage. The Fund buys the house from its indebted owners and offers it back at an affordable rent to the same family. In the long run the family has the possibility to buy it back from the state should their financial situation improve.

In Ireland, **tenancy sustainment and resettlement support** are two common preventative services in place. However, the Irish expert warns that prevention is not prominent within the Irish approach to tackling homelessness. As an example, she adds, in Dublin, in 2016 over €96m was spent on providing services for people who are homeless, but less than 5% of this amount was spent on prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement support. In Luxembourg, a law from 2006 assigns the municipalities the mission of ensuring, as far as possible, the lodging of all the people residing on their territory. According to a survey conducted in 2017, this law was implemented by 17 municipalities, who have organised accommodation for 51 people. Since only 28 municipalities (out of 102) responded to the questionnaire, it is not possible to assess whether this action was effective.

Denmark and Finland have developed different forms of prevention services, with a clear emphasis on **housing focused support services**. These include the development of new accommodation, access to supported housing, access to social housing, Housing First services and housing-focused support for specific vulnerable categories of people with unmet support needs (e.g. young people leaving child protection services, ex-offenders leaving prison, people with mental health problems, people with substance abuse issues).

- In Finland, for example, the current national homelessness programme focuses precisely on homelessness prevention. The AUNE programme (2016-2019) targets groups at risk of homelessness: overindebted and young people or families threatened with eviction, young people subject to child welfare measures, people suffering from mental health problems, substance abusers, immigrants and asylum seekers who have lost their residence permit and prisoners who have been released from prison or transferred to a trial leave programme. The aim of the programme is to produce 2,500 new dwellings for homeless people and to provide more customer-oriented, preventive and cost-effective services.

- Denmark's extensive welfare/social protection system plays an important role in preventing homelessness; at the same time, preventative measures are mostly oriented towards the provision of social housing support aimed at preventing people from losing their home. As in Finland, the Housing First strategy and ACT, CTI and ICM services have played an important role in preventing homelessness for vulnerable young people, and even in rehousing homeless people with multiple social and health problems in permanent accommodation.

In short, a comparative analysis of the reported evidence on the operation of preventative services shows that **homelessness services in Europe are not sufficiently preventative in focus**, and that there is not enough emphasis on establishing procedures for the early detection of homelessness risk situations (e.g. evictions), on ensuring prioritised access to housing and/or on rapid rehousing.

3.3 Effectiveness of homelessness services

This sub-section provides an overview of the evidence available which may help to assess the effectiveness of existing services in three main areas: i) preventing HHE; ii) providing access to permanent accommodation solutions; and iii) providing comprehensive and flexible support in line with people's support needs.

An analysis of the national ESPN experts' contributions does not give us a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of existing responses in all three aspects. In fact, one important finding when comparing the national countries' analysis of the effectiveness of homelessness support is the **paucity of evidence allowing a reliable assessment in many countries**.

Another important overall conclusion is the fact that **Housing First services** – and to a lesser extent prevention services – are by far **the area of provision where most evidence on results is available**, thus allowing a better and more robust assessment of the effectiveness of the support provided.

Table 13 provides a summary description of the evidence used to assess the effectiveness of homelessness services across the 35 countries, according to the types of services reported in the national studies.

Table 13: Available evidence on the effectiveness of existing services

	Types of services	Main results
AT	Housing First (HF) and housing-led projects; Vienna's prevention approach	Very positive results of HF pilot projects and of Voralberg housing-led programme; sharp decline of evictions following the upgrading of eviction prevention services
BE	Housing First; Access to social housing; Eviction prevention	Very positive results of HF (e.g. 90% tenants kept accommodation after 2 years); positive impact on residents' well-being. Evidence of mismatch between supply and demand for social housing. Preventative actions successful in the social housing sector; private rental sector not successfully reached
BG	Temporary accommodation and support services; Access to social housing	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to insufficient capacity of services; no prevention; very limited access to social housing
CY	Access to housing	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to important role of poverty prevention policies and to the need to develop proactive rather than reactive solutions
CZ	Prevention; Rapid re-housing and HF projects; Access to housing; Support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of prevention. Evidence of positive impact of HF/rapid rehousing projects if implemented, managed effectively and up-scaled. Very limited effectiveness of instruments promoting access to affordable rented housing. No evidence of effectiveness of adequacy of support in relation to people's needs
DE	Prevention	Existing evaluation focusing on the *Länder* and local authorities. Positive results on effectiveness of support provided by the specialist centres for the prevention of homelessness
DK	Homelessness Strategy Project; (Housing First) Implementation and Institutionalisation Project	Extensive evaluation of effectiveness of services is available. Very positive impact of the use of ICM in preventing homelessness. Strong evidence of positive impacts of ACT and CTI methods with specific groups of homeless people. Evidence of difficulties offering adequate and comprehensive support to homeless people with complex and differentiated needs. Evidence of a lack of housing supply for more vulnerable groups.
EE	Social services; Access to public housing; Social benefits	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to shortage of public housing and mismatch between supply and demand. Low level of subsistence benefits.

	Types of services	Main results
EL	Prevention; Access to permanent accommodation	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to limited provision of preventative services impeding any significant role, but importance of legal protection from foreclosure of primary home. Reference to inadequacy of access to permanent accommodation.
ES	Prevention; Housing First experimental phase.	No evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to reactive, rather than preventative approach of local services.
FI	Services provided within the National Programme covering prevention, comprehensive support and access to permanent accommodation	Strong evidence based on the regular monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Since 1987, about 12,000 homeless people have received a home. Long-term homelessness decreased by 35% between 2008 and 2015. In 2016, overall homelessness fell for the first time to fewer than 7,000 people. The housing allowance system offsets about 80% of housing costs for low-income households. Less positive results regarding the quality of services for certain subcategories of homeless people (e.g. prisoners and immigrants).
FR	Temporary accommodation; Housing First plan	Evidence of lack of effectiveness of long-term housing solutions such as social housing centres and boarding houses, and of plans to reduce hotel stays, in actually reducing homelessness. Reference to the monitoring and evaluation plan for the government's five-year programme to implement Housing First and combat homelessness published in late 2018, covering 23 areas, and 20% of the mainland population.
HR	Prevention; Access to permanent accommodation; Support services	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to a lack of prevention programmes. Presence of remedial assistance. Lack of emergency accommodation responses. Access to permanent accommodation solutions is almost non-existent. Mostly project-financed support services lacking long-term sustainability.
HU	Prevention; Support services	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to housing affordability and lack of social housing limiting effectiveness of prevention and re-integration. Positive impact of specific measures in preventing homelessness (e.g. moratorium on evictions, National Asset Management Company).
IE	Support services; Family Hubs; Prevention; Access to social housing; Housing First	Strong evidence based on the regular counting of homelessness statistics and on regular surveys and research. Reference to rising levels of HHE. Criticisms of the services for lacking effectiveness in providing comprehensive and flexible support. Evidence on negative impacts of institutionalised living provided by Family Hubs. Lack of prevention-oriented services. Inadequacy of the provision of social housing (from 12.5% of the total housing stock to 8.7%, between 1981 and 2011). Evidence of positive outcomes of Dublin Housing First regarding the retention of housing.
IT	Support services; Housing First	Lack of systematic evidence and information making it possible to assess the effectiveness of support services, except for HF. Reference to the potential of "Guidelines for Tackling Severe Adult Marginality in Italy" providing local social services with (non-binding) guidelines for using public funding in providing homelessness services. Positive results from Housing First Pilot Programme regarding increased well-being of participants and identification of constraints in scaling-up HF solutions, namely a scarcity of affordable housing.
LT	Prevention; Access to housing; Support services for specific groups	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to lack of effectiveness of prevention services given the rising number of evictions from social housing in several municipalities. Low level and reliability of funding aimed at housing solutions. Lack of social housing. Evidence of a lack of follow-up support for people living in shelters. Inadequacy of support to elderly vulnerable people.
LU	Actions undertaken within the National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020	No reliable evidence on the National Strategy's actions given the frailty of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
LV	Support services; Access to housing; Access to social assistance and benefits.	No reliable evidence on outcomes of existing services. Reference to limited effectiveness of existing services given the lack of information and diversity of provision among local governments. Reference to a

	Types of services	Main results
		scarcity of municipal housing and bad housing conditions of dwellings. Declared place of residence rule for accessing social assistance and social benefits excludes homeless people from support services (except for emergency accommodation).
MT	Prevention; Temporary accommodation; support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Reference to the low number of people sleeping rough as a result of effective existing prevention and emergency/temporary accommodation services. Reports on rising hidden homelessness situations and lack of proactive response from support services.
NL	Shelters; Access to permanent accommodation; Prevention; Housing First	Strong evidence on outcomes. 2018 study on accessibility of shelters showed that the principle of nation-wide accessibility of shelters is not respected all over the country. Evidence that average waiting times for social housing vary strongly between municipalities and are on the increase. Large families face more difficulties in finding social housing suitable for their needs. Evidence of a strong decline in evictions (almost halved between 2013 and 2017), partly attributed to stronger efforts to implement preventative actions. Housing First Netherlands assessed and outcomes on effectiveness are very positive overall.
PL	Prevention; Access to social housing.	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Reference to awareness of "eviction to nowhere" cases indicating lack of adequate preventative support and triggering regulations to protect specific categories of people. Evidence of a fall in the share of social dwellings granted to homeless people between 2010 and 2016 (from 62% to 56%). No follow-up or evidence on subsequent housing trajectories of rehoused people.
PT	Support services; Access to affordable housing; Housing First	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services, except for HF. Reference to lack of effectiveness in the provision of comprehensive and flexible support due to the restricted scope of the service or to inefficiencies in the way services are organised. Evidence of low impact of programmes to enhance access to housing among low-income families. Very positive outcomes from evaluation of Housing First projects in Lisbon.
RO	Prevention	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Reference to overall poor performance of eviction prevention and re-housing support given the lack of social housing. No integrated housing support programme for vulnerable groups is in place.
SE	Prevention; Housing First	Insufficient monitoring of effectiveness of services and general lack of data on homelessness trajectories. Evidence of increasing number of enforced evictions involving children (17.1% rise between 2017 and 2018). Positive outcomes from Housing First services: very high housing retention rates and social integration outcomes.
SI	Prevention; Access to housing	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Publicly funded programmes are reported as effective in preventing and alleviating HHE, although facing resource-constraints. Cooperation between public housing funds and NGOs is relatively effective in preventing problems escalating into potential evictions. Evidence of shortage of affordable housing and lack of housing units suitable for homeless people with disabilities and families, leading to children being placed into foster care.
SK		No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services.
UK	Prevention; Support services; Access to permanent accommodation	Evaluation of preventative services shows growing activity of prevention responses, leading to reduced number of applications and acceptances as homeless in Scotland, for example. In England, preventative services have not proved sufficiently effective given the sharp increase of homelessness. Evidence of the presence of a flexible, tolerant and a consumer choice model of support services in place as mainstream practice in the UK. Lack of data on effectiveness of many interventions (e.g. shelters, hostels, supported accommodation). Lack of comprehensive support for people not rough sleeping. Evidence of effectiveness of support in providing rough sleepers, and statutorily homeless households and other homeless people, with permanent accommodation and supporting them to sustain it.

	Types of services	Main results
AL	Access to social housing; Support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Evidence of non-take up of existing programmes to promote access to housing due to lack of information among people in need. Constant financing and sustainability challenges hinder the effectiveness of support services provided by civil society organisations.
BA	Support services; Access to emergency accommodation	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Support services are reactive rather than proactive in dealing with social issues. Homeless people face administrative barriers to access services, e.g. requiring identification documents proving residence in the municipality. Limited access of people with complex needs to emergency accommodation.
ME	Support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Reference to the non-existence of services providing comprehensive and flexible support according to people's support needs.
MK	Access to social housing; Support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services. Homeless people not considered a priority target group for accessing social housing, which is the only available permanent accommodation response. Legislative and financial provisions hinder the supply of comprehensive and flexible support.
RS	Social housing; Support services	No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services due to lack of data. Reference to low effectiveness of the role of social housing in providing affordable non-profit housing solutions, due to gaps in regulations. Scarcity of temporary housing services. Gaps in providing flexible, empowering support to shelter users, ensuring successful pathways out of homelessness.
TR		No reliable evidence on effectiveness of services.
XK	Housing support to specific groups; Social housing; Shelters	Evidence on the provision of housing support to repatriated persons shows positive results with housing assistance in accessing permanent accommodation solutions; assessment of social housing projects revealed several shortcomings at the municipal level; evidence of serious sustainability problems in the operation of shelters, leading to closure of facilities and enforced exit of clients.

Source: ESPN national reports.

In the large majority of the 35 ESPN countries (see Table 13) there is an obvious lack of rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of homelessness services. In some of these countries (e.g. CZ, PT and IT), however, the development of Housing First services triggered the implementation of evaluation procedures aimed at identifying the main impacts of this new approach.

Only in two countries, Denmark (see Box 3) and Finland, did the ESPN experts mention the existence of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework linked to the implementation of national programmes producing regular outcome assessments and enabling an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the provision of services.

> ***Box 3: The Danish knowledge-based approach***
>
> *Since the launching in 2009 of the National Homelessness Strategy in Denmark, there has been extensive work done on developing, disseminating and anchoring a knowledge-based methodology centred on a Housing First approach, combined with intensive support services and models for collaboration. In January 2018, the socio-economic investment model, SØM, was launched. The model consists of a calculator of intervention costs and budgetary consequences and a knowledge database about the effects of social interventions, as well as estimates to calculate economic consequences for different target groups. The model can be used to inform policy-making by calculating economic costs and benefits for the relevant authorities, i.e. municipalities, regions and the state. It shows how investments made in one programme, typically by municipalities, have short- and long-term effects for the regions and the state. In June 2018, €4,360,543 was set aside to fund projects that increase municipalities' incentives to invest in transforming their homelessness policies to make them more preventive and holistic. This is done by minimising the risks for the municipalities and supporting initial investments, including enabling them to better make the business case for adopting Housing First, with intensive floating support and other evidence-based solutions.*
>
> *Source: ESPN Danish report.*

In other countries (e.g. AT, DE, FR, NL), studies, surveys and data make it possible to assess the effectiveness of different types of services, although in general these exercises are neither country wide nor necessarily carried out on a regular basis. In those countries where no reliable evidence was identified, the effectiveness of certain specific types of services shown in Table 13 is mostly assessed in the light of the expert's knowledge and/or on the basis of information collected at the national level, often including views from stakeholders in the service provision sector.

Overall, it is important to highlight that there is an obvious **lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of those services making up the bulk of homelessness service provision** across Europe, i.e. non-housing focused services such as emergency and temporary accommodation and non-residential services (e.g. day centres, outreach teams, food distribution), which were present in most of Europe. Stronger evidence on the effectiveness of services is – as already mentioned – confined to prevention and/or Housing First services which, with a few notable exceptions, only account for a minority share of homelessness provision.

The evidence collected from the 35 countries may, thus, provide a useful contribution to meeting the need, already acknowledged, to strengthen the Semester analysis and improve policy guidance to Member States on effective strategies and investment gaps to support their efforts in eradicating HHE in their territories.

3.4 The main service providers and their role

Homelessness services may be provided by municipal services or other public authorities, as well as by NGOs, charitable and faith-based organisations - directly or through commissioning. Local, regional and national authorities may play different roles in providing, commissioning, funding and regulating existing services.

Overall, responsibility for the **provision of homelessness services** lies almost exclusively with **local level** institutions/organisations, with a very significant role played by NGOs, civil society organisations, charities and local authorities (see Table 14). Other public actors may also play an important role in local delivery. Such is the case in Slovenia, where the Centres for Social Work play a pivotal role in the provision of social benefits, social assistance, and direct provision of non-residential support to homeless people.

The **role of private actors is mostly centred on the provision of support** – either directly or commissioned by public authorities. They are more rarely involved in other activities, such as monitoring, evaluation or funding. According to the information provided in the national reports, this is true for more than two thirds of the countries covered by the analysis and does not seem to follow any kind of geographical pattern (e.g. AL, BA, BE, CZ, DE, EL, FR, LV, NL, PT, RO, SE, TR).

- In Albania, civil society organisations (e.g. NGOs, churches and religious foundations) ensure most service provision with regard to homelessness, playing a vital role in the operation of a number of social care services, including shelters for different categories of people in need.

- In Czechia, the national experts note that churches and NGOs represent the "lion's share" of service providers, both in the provision of emergency housing and in non-housing support, prevention services and assistance to homeless people.

- In Greece, where homelessness services fall under the responsibility of local authorities, in practice such services are often commissioned out to non-profit organisations which actually provide the support, having no involvement in any planning, coordinating, monitoring and/or evaluation activities.

Nevertheless, in some countries there are examples of a **wider shouldering of responsibilities by private stakeholders**. Examples provided by ESPN experts include the following:

- In Finland, the Y-Säätiö [The Y-Foundation] – resulting from a partnership between the municipality of Helsinki, the Finnish Construction Trade Union, the Confederation of Finnish Construction Industries, the Finnish Red Cross, the Finnish Association for Mental Health, the municipality of Tampere and the municipality of Vantaa - is the fourth largest landlord in Finland, offering rental homes to people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless, across more than 50 cities and municipalities.

- The Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People (fio.PSD) launched a two-year period of experimentation of initiatives guided by the HF approach, involving 35 different projects in ten Italian regions spread throughout the country – the "Network Housing First Italia". There was no national fund for experimentation; instead, a model of self-financing was put in place, whereby organisations had to pay a fee to join the network and to self-finance the implementation of their experiment.

- In Ireland, larger NGOs like Focus Ireland also play an important role in service evaluation and research activities.

- In Kosovo, international donors and the diaspora provide significant funding.

- Private companies and international organisations (e.g. the Red Cross, UNDP and UNHCR) are reported as having an important role in funding and coordinating the operation of shelters in Montenegro.

- The UK expert highlights the role of the largest NGOs, such as Crisis and Shelter, which carry out substantial research activity in addition to service provision. The UK is reported to have excellent data collection and monitoring by central and national governments and also by independent agencies.

Table 14: Grouping of countries according to the main responsibilities of different types of service providers

Responsibilities	Public authorities			Private actors
	Central	Regional	Local	
Planning/coordination/ regulation	BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, MT, PL, SI, SK, XK	AT, BE, CZ, ES	AL, AT, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, UK, XK	HU
Monitoring/evaluation	BG, CZ, DK, EL, FI, FR, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, UK		CZ, DE, FI, IE, LT, RO	IE, SK, UK
Funding	AL, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, ME, MT, NL, PL, PT, RS, SE, SI, TR, UK	AT, DE, ES	BA, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, TR, UK	AT, BG, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, ME, SI, XK
Provision (direct or commissioned)	LU	SK	AL, BA, BE, BG, CY, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, NL, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK, XK	AL, AT, BA, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK, XK

Source: ESPN national reports.

Public authorities – operating at the local level – are clearly **pivotal stakeholders** as regards the main responsibilities for homelessness service provision. Municipalities, local authorities, and, in some countries, decentralised units of national public bodies are present across all the different tasks identified, although with a stronger responsibility in the provision (either directly or through commissioned services) of homelessness services.

In some countries (e.g. DE, DK, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SE), municipalities are reported by ESPN experts to have a wide range of responsibilities. They act not only in the provision of assistance to homeless people, but also as key players in planning, coordinating, regulating, monitoring and/or funding the provision of services in this sector.

- In Denmark, §110 of the Law on Social Services stipulates that municipalities must offer temporary accommodation to persons with special social problems who do not have their own home or who cannot live in their own home, and who need additional assistance. Municipalities are, thus, obliged to deliver housing, support services, care and subsequent services to homeless people, and are also largely responsible for financing these offers.

- In Lithuania, municipalities have the overall task of planning, coordinating, funding, monitoring and evaluating the provision of homelessness services.

- In Latvia, both municipalities and NGOs directly provide emergency accommodation services, although the ultimate responsibility for the provision of shelters lies at the municipal level – for planning, coordination and funding of services, including those which are provided by NGOs and religious organisations.

- In the Netherlands, each municipality has a responsibility to develop and implement an integrated approach to meet the support and care needs of its citizens, i.e. different

support systems are in place across the country. However, in general, three different types of homelessness services are usually provided by NGOs and other welfare organisations under contract with Dutch municipalities: emergency/temporary accommodation, assisted housing and protected housing.

- In Romania, local authorities are the main actors in the development, management and allocation of the social housing stock as well as in the provision and/or coordination of social service providers, through their public social assistance services.

- In Sweden, responsibility for the provision of housing lies with the local authorities. Municipal social services have become an important landlord on the housing market and in most municipalities a so-called secondary housing market has been established, i.e. social services rent housing from municipal or private actors and then sublet these apartments to their clients.

In a smaller number of countries (e.g. AT, BE, CZ, DE, ES), ESPN experts highlight that **regional authorities** also play an important role in the planning, coordination and/or regulation of homelessness service provision and – to a lesser extent – in the funding of such services.

- The Austrian expert, for example, reports that federal provinces and municipalities are responsible for organising the provision of services for homeless people, although NGOs and churches are the main providers, often in co-operation with, or co-financed by, the public welfare institutions. As a consequence, the expert argues, there is substantial variation at regional, and partly, at local level as regards the extent and mix of homelessness service provision.

- In Germany, regional *Länder* programmes financially support municipalities.

- Spain is reported to have a two-level system for the planning of homelessness services, i.e. both regional governments and municipalities have responsibilities in developing homelessness plans and/or strategies as well as in the funding of programmes. However, the experts argue that their respective planning activities do not always seem to be well coordinated.

The provision of funding is the area of responsibility most frequently mentioned by national experts (see Table 14) when describing the **role of central governments** with regard to homelessness services. Different ministries and/or public administration bodies are reported to be responsible for financing homelessness programmes and/or services:

- In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies finances temporary accommodation centres and shelters which are provided by municipalities, NGOs and charities.

- In Cyprus, the State Aid Scheme provides financial aid, for the development of social programmes, to NGOs and Local Authorities which fulfil certain criteria. In 2017, 155 organisations received state aid for the operation of 241 social programmes with a total budget of approximately €7.5 million.

- In France, the Housing First research demonstration project, "*Un chez-soi d'abord*", was financed by the state's housing and health budgets and was run under the responsibility of the inter-ministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing (DIHAL), covering four French cities. Following an evaluation of this programme, the French government, in October 2018, published its five-year plan to implement Housing First and combat homelessness, which will extend the Housing First programme to most major cities (23 areas have been selected, covering 20% of the mainland population).

- In Malta, the State not only finances the work of the major service providers (Caritas Malta and YMCA) but jointly runs one of the foundations – *Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena* – through a tripartite agreement, providing full coverage of its respective staff costs.

- In Portugal, the Institute for Social Security (ISS), operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, is the main funder of NGOs in the homelessness sector, exerting some authority with regard to the configuration of working practices.

- In Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MLFSAEO) holds the main responsibility for social protection services, publishing annual calls for co-funding of such services, as well as a separate call for financing homelessness programmes.

- In Turkey, the national expert argues, the only direct support from government authorities is to help fund the provision of municipal shelters during the winter.

- In the UK, services for statutory homeless households are provided by local authorities, but largely funded by central government,

Additionally, central governments are also reported – although to a lesser extent – as playing a relevant role in the planning/regulation (BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, MT, PL, SI, SK, XK) and/or in the monitoring and evaluation of homelessness services (BG, CZ, DK, EL, FI, FR, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, UK):

- In Czechia, the Ministry of Regional Development is responsible for the regulation and financing of housing policy, whereas the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for the regulation and financing of social services and social work, as well as for monitoring and supervising quality standards across all social services.

- In Denmark, the National Board of Social Services (*Socialstyrelsen*) monitors policy development, enhances knowledge dissemination and innovative projects, administers funds to projects, and coordinates the evaluation of policies.

- In Estonia, the government is empowered by the Dwelling Act to regulate housing relationships, to set requirements and socially justified standards for dwellings, and specifications for application thereof.

- In Greece, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity bears the primary responsibility for planning, coordinating, funding, monitoring and evaluating the provision of HHE services.

- In Luxembourg, it is the government administration – through relevant ministries – which is responsible for the legal framework, taking strategic decisions, and for funding and coordination; additionally, two public housing providers are responsible for the planning, the construction and the delivery of social housing.

- In Romania, where local authorities bear the main responsibility for coordinating, managing and monitoring social service providers, the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice is in charge of accrediting and licensing these, i.e. exerting some methodological control over the organisation, the required expertise and the quality standards of service provision (on the basis of the minimum quality and cost standards set by legal norms).

Across the different countries, homelessness services tend to be provided by a mix of voluntary sector organisations and local/municipal services. Regional and sometimes national level commissioning of NGOs and other private stakeholders to provide homelessness services is also common practice in many countries. There is evidence of **different forms of collaboration**

between public and private actors in the homelessness provision sector in a number of cases (e.g. ES, FI, MT, PL, MK), although it may be present in many other national contexts. Nevertheless, the description given by the Finnish expert (see Box 4) reveals an interesting and unique collaboration system which it is important to emphasise.

Box 4: The foundations of the Finnish model: a common vision, a shared responsibility

Fighting homelessness, in Finland, is a national strategy rather than a local activity or a charity project. Indeed, combatting homelessness has become a shared goal, bringing together NGOs, municipalities and the government. Measures to reduce homelessness take many different forms (producing new flats, emergency accommodation, supported housing, other housing services, housing advice) and vary depending on the target group in question (young people, immigrants, people leaving prison, people with mental health problems, drug abusers etc.). The idea is that homelessness is not a problem that can be solved within just one sector but rather must be addressed via extensive cooperation and coordination between the various relevant sectors. So far, the Finnish model of service production (services in-kind and in-cash) has been a success story.

Source: ESPN Finnish report.

3.5   Main recent innovations in the provision of homelessness services

This sub-section provides summarised results of the assessment made by ESPN national experts regarding important innovations in the provision of homelessness services in the last five years in their respective countries. Table B1 in Annex B presents a detailed description of these innovations. In a small group of countries (AL, BA, BG, LV, MT, SI, TR), however, ESPN experts do not report major innovations during this period.

One of the main outputs of the comparative analysis of the responses provided by national experts was the identification of **eight major areas of innovation** (see Figure 7).

The **introduction/development of Housing First services** is, by far, the most cited innovation to have occurred in the last five years. It is considered a major innovation in 14 countries covering a wide geographical area across the EU, although the descriptions provided show that the reasons why the provision of Housing First services was selected as an innovative example vary greatly. In some countries (e.g. AT, ES, FR, LU, NL, UK) there is evidence of the expansion of Housing First services as the major recent innovation, whereas in others Housing First is just beginning to emerge (e.g. CZ, DE, SK). In Poland, the real innovation is the emergence of a broader movement for developing housing-led services and strong advocacy work by NGOs to achieve the start of a Housing First pilot programme, rather than the actual implementation of Housing First services. Housing First, as a homelessness service model, is garnering increasing interest across a variety of European countries, as part of a process which – as discussed in Sub-section 3.3 above – has been widely supported by evidence-based assessment of the effectiveness of its outcomes.

Figure 7: Countries where ESPN experts have identified important recent innovations in homelessness service provision by areas of innovation
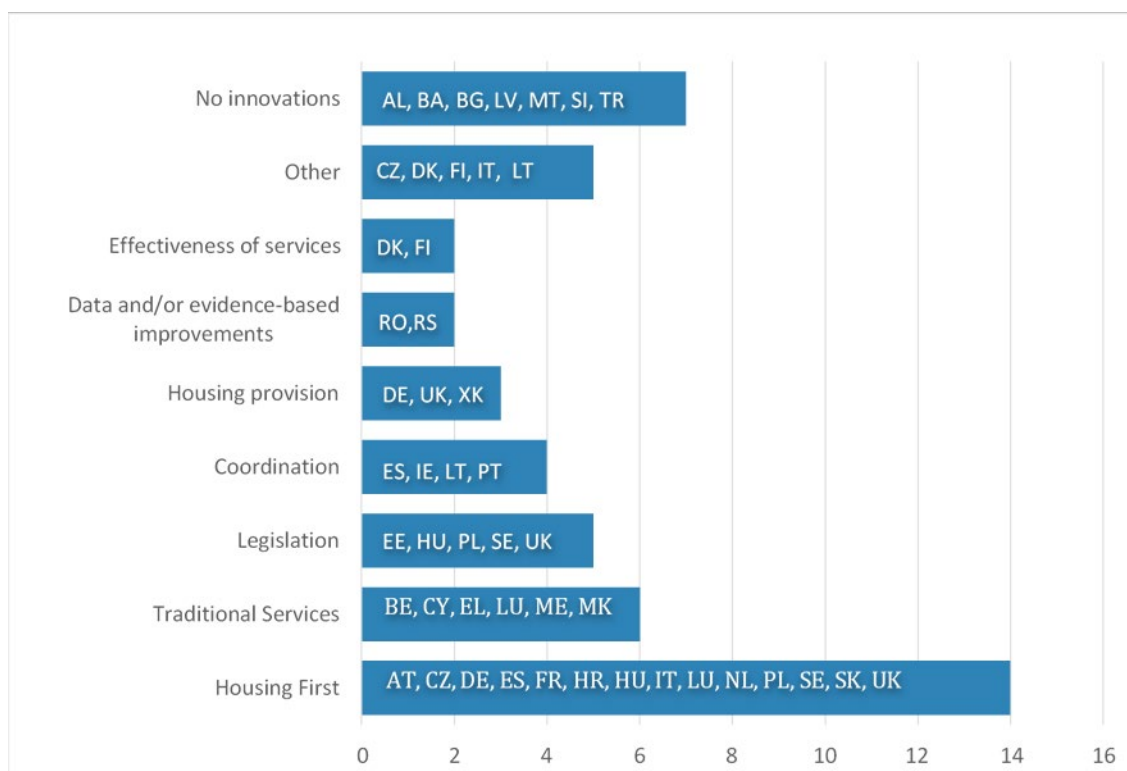
Source: ESPN national reports. See Table B1 for a short presentation of major innovations.

Several national experts (see Figure 7) describe a variety of what might be called **traditional services as important innovations** within their national context of homelessness service provision:

- In Belgium, the expert highlights the role of the Belgian Homeless Cup (BHC) which supports all initiatives that use football as a means to foster the social inclusion of homeless people in Belgium: enhancing a meaningful use of leisure time, building self-confidence and developing a positive self-image.

- The first two temporary accommodation centres opened for homeless people in Cyprus are mentioned as "novel and praiseworthy efforts" in the national context, although, the expert argues, they are not an innovative type of homelessness service.

- The Ithaca Mobile Laundry for the Homeless and the Shower Bus for Homeless people, both in Athens, are presented as important service innovations in the provision of homelessness services in Greece. Both services are run by non-profit organisations and target mainly people sleeping rough in the city of Athens. These services are funded by sponsors and donors.[28]

- In Montenegro, a shelter opened for homeless people in Podgorica in 2017 (closed down in 2019 after being assessed as financially unsustainable) and new public kitchens are considered the most important innovative elements in service provision with positive effects on people's daily lives.

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[28] Parsell and Watts (2017) have developed an insightful critique of charity-driven "novel" services targeting people sleeping rough which have expanded across different geographical contexts in recent years. See: https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/think-piece-12032277176126500690.pdf.

The **adoption of and/or changes to legal provisions** affecting the delivery of homelessness services are mentioned as important innovations in a small number of countries (see Figure 7). In both Estonia and Poland, the experts refer to the introduction of legal minimum standards regarding the operation of existing homelessness services.

- In Estonia, the Social Welfare Act (2016) established minimum requirements for the operation of services; a general guide was then produced to enhance the quality of social services (2018).

- In Poland, legal minimum standards for overnight and 24-hour shelters were introduced in 2018, following lengthy discussion around the need to introduce standardisation mechanisms with the participation of NGOs.

- In the UK, the adoption of the Housing (Wales) Act in 2014, and the Homelessness Prevention Act 2017 (for England) were presented as important major innovations in a country where the power to legislate on housing policy is devolved to the different nations.

Improved **coordination mechanisms and/or procedures** are considered important innovations in Portugal and Spain, two countries traditionally characterised by fragmented traditional approaches to homelessness service provision (Baptista 2016). In Portugal, the National Homelessness Strategy (ENIPSSA 2017-2023) has strengthened existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms in order to overcome previously identified obstacles which hindered the successful implementation of the first national homelessness strategy. In Spain, the expert highlights the joint development of housing and health access programmes based on cooperation between different private actors, e.g. the alliance between the main association offering housing or flats for homeless people in Spain, the *Provivienda* Association, and the *RAIS* Foundation.

In Germany, Kosovo and the UK there are examples of recent innovations in the area of **housing provision**, which vary widely in nature and scope. These include: i) the introduction of a package of measures aimed at intensifying housing construction and ensuring affordability of housing by supporting the construction of 1.5 million new apartments between 2018 and 2021 (DE); ii) the development of social housing units through public private partnerships and applying the "do no harm" approach for repatriated persons and returnees (XK); and iii) the construction of "Tiny homes", which can be built more quickly and cheaply than others and have been promoted as suitable for single people including homeless people (UK).

In two countries (RO, RS), important innovations aiming at strengthening the existing **data collection and knowledge** of the situation of homeless people and specific vulnerable groups in the population may help to promote the development of evidence-based policies and interventions:

- The Romanian expert refers to the introduction of a methodological instrument enabling local authorities to better identify and prioritise interventions targeting marginalised communities and enhancing the monitoring of housing programmes;

- In Serbia, the expert mentions a geographical information system introduced in 2016 – as part of an EU funded programme – which enables local authorities to map and update the situation of substandard Roma settlements, paving the way for developing evidence-based policies at the local level.

In Denmark and Finland (two countries with integrated strategies, combining extensive preventative systems with a range of housing-led services), experts consider that the **measures to enhance the effectiveness of existing programmes and services** are the most important recent innovations. Such is the case of the Danish Socio-economic investment model (SØM), presented in

Box 3, and the AUNE project (2016-2019), aiming to produce 2,500 new dwellings for homeless people and to provide more customer-oriented, preventive and cost-effective services.

Several other innovations are also mentioned by ESPN experts in various countries (see Figure 7), which do not easily fit into any of the categories presented above. Such is the case of the development of preventative services (CZ, LT), of new participatory models of support (CZ), of the new regulations for extreme weather conditions (HU), of a new funding line introduced to support "extreme poverty and homeless people", which finances services and initiatives dedicated to homeless people (IT), or of projects aimed at increasing public and political awareness of the invisibility of homeless women, with the goal of eliminating female homelessness (FI).

Overall, an analysis of the descriptions given by the ESPN experts of important innovations in the last five years shows a wide diversity of innovative elements of service provision across much of Europe. It also recalls how crucial it is to be attentive to the context of the patterns of service provision across the different countries in order to understand the criteria used to select the initiatives described as relevant innovations. Finally, the comparative analysis seems to confirm the **growing progress towards innovative, effective and integrated responses to homelessness throughout Europe**, such as the establishment or the dissemination of Housing First and housing-led services, either within or separately from strategic approaches to homelessness.

3.6 Main systemic causes limiting and/or enhancing sustainable ways out of homelessness

Overall, homelessness is seen as being primarily caused by a complex and intertwined set of constraints related to the **design of housing policies and to the operation of housing markets** across much of Europe. In all 35 countries (see Table 15), the national experts identify housing-related causes as the main systemic causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness and/or hindering the potential of homelessness preventative policies. Housing-related issues were already prominent as the main drivers for increasing levels of homelessness identified in the large majority of EU countries (see Sub-section 1.4).

Table 15: Main housing-related systemic causes

	Description of main housing-related causes
AT	Rising housing costs; lack of affordable housing; mismatch between demand and supply; lack of available dwellings within the public housing stock; entry costs restraining access to Limited Profit Housing Association (LPHA) dwellings
BE	Rising housing costs; limited availability of social housing stock; mismatch between demand and supply; low quality of social housing
BG	Very low quality of social housing; illegal temporary housing settlements
CY	Lack of affordable housing
CZ	Rising housing costs; lack of affordable social/public housing
DE	Lack of affordable housing; mismatch between demand and supply; discrimination in the rental housing market
DK	Lack of affordable housing; insufficient housing supply; mismatch between demand and supply
EE	Lack of available dwellings within the public housing stock
EL	Lack of social housing; rising housing costs; lack of affordable housing
ES	Lack of affordable housing; insufficient housing supply; mismatch between demand and supply
FI	Lack of affordable housing in the rental market; uneven access to affordable housing in different municipalities
FR	Lack of affordable housing in the rental market; mismatch between demand and supply of social housing; low quality of social housing

	Description of main housing-related causes
HR	Lack of affordable social or rented housing
HU	Lack of social housing; lack of affordable housing
IE	Financialisation of the social housing sector; subsidisation of the private rental housing market; rising housing costs; lack of affordable and secure rented housing
IT	Lack of affordable social and public housing; consistent decline of the public housing system
LT	Lack of affordable social housing; increasing evictions from social housing; inadequate funding of social housing; mismatch between demand and supply
LU	Lack of affordable housing; lack of social housing; rising housing costs
LV	Insufficient municipal housing stock; lack of affordable housing; poor quality of housing; insufficient funding; insufficient temporary housing solutions to address crisis situations
MT	Lack of new investments in social housing; mismatch between demand and supply of social housing; rising housing costs; liberalisation of the rental market
NL	Lack of social housing; mismatch between demand and supply of social housing
PL	Insufficient supply of municipal housing; insufficient funding for expanding the supply of municipal housing
PT	Lack of social housing; mismatch between demand and supply of social housing; lack of affordable housing; rising housing costs; failure of specific programmes for increasing social rental market solutions
RO	Lack of social housing; mass evictions due to property restitution; emergence of collective and segregated forms of homelessness
SE	Lack of affordable housing; mismatch between demand and supply of rented accommodation; rising housing costs in the rental market; redefined role of municipal housing companies
SI	Lack of social housing; lack of affordable rented housing; impact of the tourism industry on the availability of the rental housing stock
SK	Lack of affordable rented housing; lack of social housing; discrimination in access to social housing and access barriers to social housing for homeless people
UK	Low rates of building; lack of social housing; lack of affordable and secure rented housing; falling rates of home ownership; short private rented tenancies
AL	Insufficient supply of social housing; insufficient funding; insufficient human capacities at both central and local level in the social housing sector
BA	Problems with property law implementation; unregulated housing market and rising housing costs; very limited availability of social housing stock
ME	Lack of affordable social housing
MK	Lack of social housing for homeless persons; high housing costs; housing insecurity, i.e. living in illegally built buildings
RS	Poor quality of housing conditions among the Roma population
TR	Poor quality of housing conditions among the Roma population and Syrian refugees
XK	Lack of social housing (mismatch between demand and supply of social housing units), procedural obstacles and inappropriate distribution of social housing units

Source: ESPN national reports.

The ESPN national reports paint an overall picture of a **widespread lack of affordable housing** as a main systemic cause of homelessness. Several inter-related factors contribute to this problem: the insufficient public (municipal and/or social) housing supply, rising housing costs in the rental housing market, the liberalisation of the housing rental market, low or decreasing public investment in the supply of social housing, the mismatch between demand and supply of affordable housing, either affecting particular territories or particular groups of households and individuals, and the impact of the tourism industry on the supply of affordable rented housing.

Some of these findings seem to corroborate increasing concerns voiced by various national and EU level stakeholders active in the HHE area. One example can be found in the recently released 2019 Fourth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe (Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA 2019). The report points to several worrying factors and trends across the EU, namely: the increasingly high

share of housing expenditure, particularly among poor households (in 2017, the proportion of poor households overburdened by housing costs[29] rose to 38%, i.e. 0.8 pp more than in 2010); the particularly high housing costs faced by poor tenants who were confronted with increased housing costs between 2007 and 2017 in three quarters of EU countries; in 2017, 8.4% of EU-28 poor households (compared to 3.3% of non-poor households) were in arrears on their rent or on their mortgage.

The 2019 Joint Employment Report (JER)[30] had also pointed out some important persisting challenges in relation to HHE, e.g. housing quality problems in some countries, despite an overall improvement in access to housing of good quality during the last decade; the significantly high share of household disposable income spent on housing-related expenditure in a number of Member States; and the rising rents which are an increasing burden on the poor.

Moreover, issues of **insecurity of tenure**, **increased evictions**, **poor housing quality**, **overcrowding** and specific **barriers to access to housing** contribute to the complex structural nature of housing-related hindrances limiting effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness and contributing to increased risks of homelessness.

Poverty, **unemployment**, the **low level of welfare benefits**, the **lack of social protection**, and the changing nature of work leading to **less secure and low-wage employment** are also mentioned as important structural causes by a considerable number of countries (e.g. BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, UK).

- The Belgian expert notes that the at-risk-of poverty rate among tenants increased from 28.6% in 2009 to 36.4% in 2017.

- In Denmark, housing price increases led to less mobility in the cheap part of the market, particularly affecting young persons, who have seen their minimum income benefits cut considerably.

- In Estonia, Hungary, Italy and Portugal the experts report on the inadequacy of existing welfare benefits (e.g. minimum income schemes), whereas the complexity and slow administration of housing benefits are reported in the UK.

- In Greece, the expert highlights the impact of unprecedented levels of unemployment and significant cuts in wages and salaries triggered by the financial crisis.

- In Ireland, low-income families came to comprise the bulk of the homelessness sector in the aftermath of the economic and social crisis of 2008, which put the Irish market-based housing system under extreme strain.

Problems with the **effectiveness of prevention mechanisms** are also mentioned by several countries (e.g. BE, CZ, FR, IE, LT, LU, RO, SE, UK), as regards the impact of eviction procedures and the risk of homelessness.

- In Belgium, although effective mechanisms are in place to prevent evictions from social rented housing, the sharp rise in evictions (20% increase over the last years) is mainly due to the private rental market where the effectiveness of such mechanisms is much lower. The Belgian experts note that children have been particularly affected by this sharp increase: in 2014, children were involved in 25% of the eviction procedures and at the

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[29] Households overburdened by housing costs are households spending more than 40% of their disposable income on housing.

[30] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20431&langId=en.

end of that year, approximately 1,800 children in Flanders lived in homelessness facilities, including night shelters and transit housing.

- As in Belgium, Sweden is reported to have developed specific support work to prevent evictions and, in many municipalities, assigned staff work to prevent evictions; nevertheless, the number of enforced evictions involving children increased by 17.1% between 2017 (211 evictions) and 2018 (247 evictions).

- In both Czechia and Ireland, poor regulation of eviction procedures is an important trigger for HHE, which is exacerbated by a lack of prevention-oriented support services.

Organisational factors are also identified as systemic causes for HHE by several ESPN experts (e.g. AT, CZ, EL, ES, FI, FR, PL, UK). These include: lack of information on existing services, the unequal access to and uneven quality of services provided, barriers restraining access to services, lack of human resources, low availability of specialised support and inadequate support available in relation to homeless people's needs.

- In Austria, barriers to non-Austrians or people in an illegal situation, as well as regional variations in services affecting the quality of support, are identified as important causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness.

- In Spain, the expert notes that a lack of tailored support for the professional reintegration of homeless people paves the way for inadequate offers of support.

- In Finland, the main challenge with all of the different forms of support is that actual access depends on a person's knowledge and ability to apply for the help they need, which homeless people often lack.

- The Polish expert states that non-existent, difficult to access or ineffective interventions reducing addiction (e.g. waiting lists for addiction therapies), joblessness (e.g. ineffective job search help) or indebtedness (e.g. difficult access to personal bankruptcy) make it harder for individuals to successfully navigate a sustainable pathway out of homelessness.

Legal obstacles also hinder the effectiveness of homelessness prevention and intervention services. In Bulgaria and Croatia, ESPN experts note, homeless people without documents are invisible to the state and therefore prevented from having access to social housing or to any social rights. In France, legislation prevents non-nationals awaiting or in the process of arranging settled status from accessing work and accommodation in the social housing sector, thus barring access to social housing and to ordinary housing; as a result, families are blocked for months or even years in CHRSs or substandard hotels.

Individual and family related causes are also reported in a limited number of countries (e.g. CZ, LU, MT, PL, NL) as contributing to overall systemic causes. These include family instability arising from increased divorce and/or separation, family violence, drug and alcohol addiction problems, and mental health and other health related issues.

In the **seven non-EU countries**, **a common set of underlying causes** are identified by ESPN experts: housing-related causes (see Table 15), lack of adequate support services, insufficient funding, and legal and procedural obstacles. However, **other specific causes** also emerge from the discussion provided by the national experts. In Albania and Turkey, domestic violence is highlighted as a serious problem affecting women and girls, for whom no adequate and comprehensive support is available. The consequences of war, such as the destruction of housing and the forced displacement of populations, is reported both in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Difficulties in property restitution (e.g. XK) and property legalisation among the Roma

population (e.g. AL) have direct negative consequences on the housing situation of many households. The Turkish expert notes that the refugee camps have been providing shelter (and questionable support) to a small fraction of a total of 3.5 million Syrian refugees, i.e. a substantial number of people are left on their own. Finally, the absence of integrated policies or approaches for assessing the needs of and providing support to homeless people is reported as an important systemic cause in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Cyprus, Poland and Slovenia are the only three countries where national experts explicitly identified **systemic causes enhancing** – rather than limiting – **effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness**:

- In Cyprus, the national expert identifies three main strengths: i) the vibrant economy fostering the creation of employment opportunities and fuelling public resources; ii) the low levels of HHE render the problem manageable; and iii) strong social ties act as an informal welfare network.

- In Poland, a recent improvement is reported regarding the increased level of financial support made available for municipal social housing by the Co-Payment Fund, as well as recent legal changes enabling more discretion in municipal rental policy to monitor tenants' income.

- The Slovenian social protection system (e.g. welfare benefits and services) and the reliability of the MLFSAEO extensive co-funding of service provision are the main systemic causes enhancing effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness.

The discussion of the main systemic causes highlighted in the 35 national reports is directly related to the identification of the main gaps/priorities for improvement. The main gaps/weaknesses in the provision of services for homeless people as well as the priorities for improvement in service provision for homeless people are described in detail in the summary table included in Annex B (in Tables B2 and B3, respectively).

ANNEX A: FEANTSA ETHOS-LIGHT TYPOLOGY

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION		DEFINITION
1	People living rough	1	Public spaces / external spaces	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided
		4	Temporary accommodation	
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	
		6	Women's shelters or refuge accommodation	
4	People living in institutions	7	Health care institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
		10	Non-conventional buildings	
		11	Temporary structures	
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Source: https://www.feantsa.org/download/fea-002-18-update-ethos-light-0032417441788687419154.pdf.

ANNEX B: ADDITIONAL SUMMARY TABLES

Table B1: Main recent innovations in the provision of homelessness services

Country	Innovations
AT (Austria)	Increased move towards Housing-First methods
BE (Belgium)	Assistance to social housing residents with significant psychological problems
	Belgian Homeless Cup (football)
BG (Bulgaria)	No innovations (HHE not recognised as a widespread or serious problem)
CY (Cyprus)	Centres for homeless. Although these cannot be defined as innovations in the provision of homelessness services, they are novel and praiseworthy efforts for the policy context of Cyprus
CZ (Czechia)	Implementation of the Housing First (rapid re-housing) approach
	Increasing emphasis on social work with the homeless and on prevention, also including empowerment and participative methods of working with the homeless, accompanied by specific targeted projects
DE (Germany)	Variety of measures to intensify housing construction and ensure affordability of housing, including the construction of 1.5 million new apartments. Individual *Bundesländer* such as North Rhine-Westphalia have financially supported the implementation of Housing First through regional programmes
DK (Denmark)	Social Free Card – The card gives socially vulnerable people the possibility to earn up to €2,680 annually tax-free and without the earned income leading to any reduction in social assistance or other benefits that the homeless person may be claiming
	Socio-economic investment model (SØM), which consists of a calculator of intervention costs and budgetary consequences and a knowledge database about the effects of social interventions, as well as estimates to calculate the economic consequences for different target groups
EE (Estonia)	Amendments to the Social Welfare Act
	Development of general guide on the quality of social services
EL (Greece)	Ithaca's Mobile Laundry for the Homeless in Athens
	Shower Bus for Homeless people
ES (Spain)	Shift from a welfare logic, based on the offer of shelters or residences, to a housing-led logic/ Housing First methodology
	Development of housing and health access programmes, run by specialised NGOs
FI (Finland)	AUNE project (2016-19), whose purpose is to produce 2,500 new dwellings for homeless people and to provide more customer-oriented, preventive and cost-effective services
	NEA project (2018-20), whose main aim is to make female homelessness more visible on the political agenda and to eliminate female homelessness
FR (France)	Housing First strategy
HR (Croatia)	Housing First project in the city of Zagreb run by the Croatian Homelessness Network (initial stage)
HU	New Housing First initiatives funded from EU funds. A special regulation was introduced in 2017, the so-called "red-code", for days which are too cold (below minus 10 degree Celsius) and too hot (above 27 degree Celsius). The regulation states that not only do homeless shelters have to take homeless clients and offer safe stay, but the same applies to any social institutions which have beds. The regulation is contained in the Social Act (1993. III., 65/. § (3)). The aim is to prevent people sleeping rough from extreme health risks and death
IE (Ireland)	Family Hubs, whose aim is to provide a form of emergency accommodation that offers greater stability for homeless families, facilitate more coordinated needs assessment and support planning, including on-site access to required services (such as welfare, health and housing services). Family Hubs provide appropriate family support and surroundings but they are temporary
IT (Italy)	Housing First approach. Also worth mentioning is a new funding line that was introduced to support "extreme poverty and homeless people"; it finances services and initiatives targeted at homeless people and is promoted by the regional and local authorities

Country	Innovations
LT (Lithuania)	Project oriented towards a new system for integrating newly released prisoners into society – transitional supported accommodation is established for people before the end of their detention. Social services are provided, including counselling, aimed at preparing prisoners for independent living
	Transitional supported accommodation for people moving from homeless shelters to independent accommodation. Such accommodation is provided together with support from social workers for managing finances and debts, and other counselling services, which help with the adjustment to independent living
LU (Luxembourg)	Housing First
	Night-stops ("Haltes de nuit") in Luxembourg City to offer a low-threshold access to the homeless, so they can rest during the night, warm up, wash themselves and their clothes as well as have a snack and breakfast, and where dogs are allowed
	Monthly subsidies of €100 per lodging to other organisations who provide accommodation as part of a "social rental management" arrangement
	A series of other innovative services for the homeless, apart from housing, have been introduced in recent years, including an emergency telephone call possibility and several low-threshold day centres
LV (Latvia)	No important innovations
MT (Malta)	No important innovations
NL (Netherlands)	Housing First
PL (Poland)	Minimum legal standards for overnight and 24-hour shelters
	Implementation of the Social Lettings Agency (SLA) project, which is an intermediary between private landlords and people who have no access to social housing (they are, for example, on waiting lists) but who, at the same time, are able to pay a substantial proportion of the rent for private sector housing
	Emergence of a broader movement to develop housing-led services for the homeless
	Advanced advocacy to start a Housing-First pilot
PT (Portugal)	A coordinated strategy, including a specific strand dedicated to the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy itself, which may help to pave the way for innovation in the provision of homelessness services. (Under the former strategy, all coordination was stopped.)
RO (Romania)	Methodology for identifying marginalised communities, which grants greater powers to local authorities to establish and prioritise interventions, as well as providing an important framework for monitoring housing programmes
SE (Sweden)	Introduction of Housing First services
	Recent legislation that forces municipalities to take in newly arrived migrants could result in innovative solutions
SI (Slovenia)	No important innovation
SK (Slovakia)	Pilot testing of the Housing First approach in two municipalities, with strong support to social integration projects, building of social counselling teams, etc.
UK (United Kingdom)	Housing First and Housing First-type projects are being expanded
	"Tiny homes", which can be built more quickly and cheaply than others and which have been promoted as suitable for single people including homeless people
	Legislation: Housing Act 2014 (Wales), and Homelessness Prevention Act 2017 (England)
AL	No real innovation
BA	No real innovation
ME (Montenegro)	New public kitchens
MK (North Macedonia)	Launch of the magazine "Face to face" (2012), whose vendors come from various vulnerable groups including homeless people and who receive 50% of the magazine price. The vendors also take part in educational programmes to improve their communication and motivation skills
RS (Serbia)	The establishment of the geographical information system in 2016, developed to map the situation of substandard Roma settlements in Serbia, will, for the first time, provide an active up-to-date information system enabling the creation of evidence-based local policies

Country	Innovations
TR	No real innovation
XK (Kosovo)	The establishment of social housing units through public private partnerships
	Applying the "do no harm" approach to repatriated persons and returnees. While these two interventions may not qualify as "innovative", they are positive developments in Kosovo

Source: ESPN national reports.

Table B2: Main gaps/weaknesses in the provision of services for homeless people

Country	Main Gaps/Weaknesses
AT (Austria)	Responsibilities for relevant policy areas spread across the different layers of the political and administrative system
	Regional differentiation, together with a lack of integrated strategies in some federal provinces
	Access to services is, in many cases, denied to people without Austrian citizenship and/or people who cannot prove that they have resided legally in the relevant federal province for a specific minimum duration
BE (Belgium)	Lack of a common framework for understanding homelessness
	Housing prices have risen more rapidly than incomes
BG (Bulgaria)	Lack of information/ statistics/analysis
	Lack of a systematic approach to prevention
	Lack of political will to tackle the problems of Roma ghettos and illegal buildings
	Complicated administrative procedures for accessing services
	Lack of a unified strategy at national and local level
CY (Cyprus)	Lack of data and monitoring mechanisms
	Lack of strategic approach
	Inadequate level of welfare benefits
	Insufficient use of EU housing indicators in policy documents
CZ (Czechia)	Lack of legal regulation and suitable instruments supporting the social housing sector, as a systemic solution to HHE
	Lack of instruments enabling homeless people to return to standard housing, such as Housing First and rapid re-housing
	A high risk of eviction due to legislation that does not sufficiently protect tenants in rented housing
	Insufficient role of municipalities in meeting citizens' need for housing and in enforcing the right to housing
	Absence of short-term low-threshold inpatient health services for people who have no other possibility of follow-up care
DE (Germany)	Housing shortage
	No basis for an appropriate public perception of the extent and structure, causes and possible solutions to the problem of HHE
	The use of both punitive legal actions and socio-political interventions in the approach to homelessness
	Heterogeneous and confusing structure of municipal support
DK (Denmark)	Systemic lack of appropriate and affordable housing
	Lack of holistic, coordinated measures for the homeless, who often have complex, multiple problems
	Underfunded and understaffed psychiatric system
	Lack of adequate housing offers to certain groups of homeless, in particular young persons with special needs (healthcare and mentors), women who are often subject to verbal and physical abuse, and elderly homeless with care needs
EE (Estonia)	The exact number of homeless people (people living rough) is not known
	No specific strategy for addressing and reducing homelessness
	Services provided by the local governments have different levels of accessibility and quality
	Information about existing services is insufficient
EL (Greece)	Weak governance in the public housing policy area, thus the impact of the measures taken to tackle HHE remains rather limited
	Severe lack of reliable official data on HHE

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Country	Main Gaps/Weaknesses
	No strategic framework accompanied by a comprehensive action plan for homelessness, as well as lack of a solid institutional setting/strategic mechanism with planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluation tasks
	Persistent lack of social housing schemes, which makes current policy responses insufficient to tackle HHE effectively
	Insufficient public funding
ES (Spain)	No common methodology for diagnosing homelessness
	Lack of implementation of strategy ENI-PSH 2015-2020
	The regional housing departments and, in general, the National Housing Plan, do not include homelessness
	Failure of mainstream employment programmes to incorporate homeless people
	Absence of health departments in the planning of social and healthcare, for a group with chronic diseases or very bad health
	Growing aporophobia or hate crimes against the poor living on the streets, which is not adequately covered by the Criminal Code and is not something which the public is aware of
FI (Finland)	Heavy bias towards owner-occupied housing, resulting in a lack of affordable rental apartments
	30 to 35% of people released from prisons are released into homelessness, i.e. when they are released they do not have proper accommodation
FR (France)	Poor quality of emergency accommodation (logistical reception conditions and individual attention), in particular during winter -action plans
	Difficulty in apprehending and using policies and services that successive legislation and layering of measures have made too complex
	The system is centred on shelters and emergency accommodation during the winter
	Social services struggle to change from an institutional approach to providing support in an open environment
HR (Croatia)	Lack of a definition of HHE
	Some cities ignore this complex social problem and the majority are not fulfilling their obligation to fund services for the homeless
	Insufficient funding of projects, which makes the services provided very limited
	Services for the homeless are not an integral part of social care
	Questionable quality of a number of the services provided
HU (Hungary)	Lack of home -maintenance support
	Difficulties experienced by groups with special needs (the elderly, psychiatric patients, people with addiction problems, people with disabilities, women, couples, people leaving foster care or prison) in accessing services and receiving adequate support
	Lack of a regulation on the rental market and resulting affordability problems, which make several people homeless or force them to live in workers' hostels or illegal housing options, or in remote areas with poor or no job opportunities and public services and high commuting costs
	Inadequate level of social benefits and general income support, including the inadequacy of support provided to homeless families with children/families on a very low income and without housing
	The quality of existing services – shelters should be significantly modernised to meet quality standards, and housing-led provision with floating support services should be scaled up considerably
IE (Ireland)	Serious gaps in the definition and counting of the extent of HHE
	Insufficient investment in prevention is another weakness
	While the social housing supply is slowly increasing, it is not recovering quickly from very low levels, and a diminution of the role of local authorities in long-term social housing is a long-term trend

Country	Main Gaps/Weaknesses
IT (Italy)	Endemic scarcity of public resources dedicated to the public housing sector; limited availability of public dwellings
	Geographical variance in the provision of services to tackle homelessness; this makes it very difficult to fully develop the new strategy
	Not all individuals in absolute poverty are eligible for the minimum income scheme, meaning that eligibility criteria may be too strict and the homeless may be excluded
LT (Lithuania)	Lack of a national strategy on HHE. No systematic approach to preventing and tackling HHE
	Restricted definition of homelessness
	Insufficient funding of social protection
	Long waiting lists for social housing; low access, scope and effectiveness of rent compensation and other services; inadequate funding for social housing
	Shelter accommodation characterised as low-intensity service rather than a sustainable long-term solution for the problem of homelessness
	Heterogeneous characteristics and needs of homeless people are not reflected in service provision
	Stigmatisation of homeless people
LU (Luxembourg)	Gap between supply and demand on the housing market, particularly on the social rental market
	Failure to involve the majority of municipalities both in increased construction of social housing and in the decentralisation of reception facilities, such as day and night shelters and hostels
	High prices in the rental market combined with a lack of social housing
	The legal basis for the setting of binding social housing quotas for municipalities has been abandoned
Latvia (LV)	Reduction of homelessness is not among the national priorities, and no targeted policy measures are envisaged in any national policy document
	How HHE is addressed at the local level depends on the understanding of local governments/ social services, their level of knowledge, attitude and readiness to address homelessness problems
	Low-intensity services, offering basic non-housing support and emergency accommodation, form the bulk of the homelessness service provision, without move-on possibilities to temporary accommodation and further on also to a permanent place of residence
	Insufficient state support to local governments for the construction of rental and social housing. The development of long-term rental housing, at affordable rents, for the most vulnerable groups and needy people, is not promoted
MT (Malta)	Lag in investment in social housing during the 2013-2017 legislature
	Entitlement to social housing is never reviewed and persons allocated social housing continue to live there indefinitely, and for successive generations
	Sudden rise in rents, not accompanied by a parallel increase in state pensions and salaries
	Lack of a unified definition of homelessness. Operators in the field use a very narrow working definition that essentially means "rooflessness"
	Lack of a clear holistic strategy, formally defined and legally enacted
NL (Netherlands)	Shortage of social housing, most notably in the four largest cities
	Little is known about the choices that municipalities make when designing their services
	Municipalities employ "generalist" social workers who are able to identify various types of care and support needs. This may also mean that target groups such as the homeless, who need a specific type of approach and support, do not always receive the support they need
PL (Poland)	Focus of funding and regulations on non-housing shelter solutions and social assistance, which undermines prevention, housing-led approach, comprehensiveness of support and deinstitutionalisation
	Low supply of municipal housing, which restricts development of housing-led interventions such as social dwellings, sheltered training dwellings or Housing-First services

Country	Main Gaps/Weaknesses
	Poor coordination between different levels of government (central, regional and local) and between services regulated by different acts and implemented by different ministries and departments, different public and NGO-based providers of services, which limits the efficiency of services
	Low quality of homeless census methodology and administrative data, which is a barrier to the development of an evidence-based approach
PT (Portugal)	Priority given to staircase models and low-intensity support services over housing-led solutions and high-intensity support services, which leads to insufficient provision of comprehensive and flexible support in line with people's support needs
	The persistence of a funding model for service providers, which does not enhance organisational cooperation or the integration/ complementarity of services, but rather encourages competition
	The lack of overall structures (e.g. umbrella organisations), which could enhance capacity building within the homelessness sector
	The fact that there is generally no evaluation of services
	The overall imbalances in the housing market
RO (Romania)	The absence of clearly defined housing policies (old, obsolete legislative framework and no national strategy) and a rudimentary operational definition of HHE
	Short supply of public/social housing
	Weak in-depth preventive and remedial social services
	Lack of a social housing benefit system
	Insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of existing services
SE (Sweden)	Lack of an integrated strategy involving cooperation on a local, regional and national level
	Lack of data
	No monitoring of the costs of homelessness
SI (Slovenia)	Huge shortage of non-profit housing
	Difficulty in estimating the number of homeless people. This is due to overlaps between programme users, the possibility to use some programmes anonymously, and also the fact that some providers of programmes for the homeless do not report on their clients
	Lack of surveys or other sources providing information on the characteristics of the homeless population
SK (Slovakia)	No national strategy on homelessness
	No regular collection of data on homelessness
	Lack of coordination of social services for homeless people
	Shortage of public rental housing
	Limited access of homeless people to healthcare and public services
UK (United Kingdom)	Lack of political will
	Lack of finance for homelessness prevention and support
	Lack of finance and rules which would allow housing allowances to meet the full costs of households on the lowest incomes, regardless of tenure or family size
	Insufficient supply of affordable, good quality, secure housing
AL (Albania)	Lack of reliable data on housing and HHE
	Limited capacities and resources in the central and local level structures dealing with social housing policies
	Weak inter-sectorial coordination to respond to the multiple social exclusion drivers of homelessness
	There is no assessment of the impact of social housing programmes on the well-being of beneficiaries
BA (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Absence of a basic policy framework on homelessness to allow the issue to be addressed in a systematic manner. Homeless persons are not explicitly recognised as a category of persons in need of social assistance or social services

Country	Main Gaps/Weaknesses
	Lack of a clear definition of homelessness
	Lack of capacity and resources to provide support to persons who are homeless
	Lack of coordination, not only between different levels of government and different entities, but also between sectors
	Lack of data that would enable the measurement and monitoring of HHE in the country, and which would allow for evidence-based policy responses
ME (Montenegro)	Lack of research and data on HHE
	Absence of strategies targeting homeless people
	Lack of housing programmes focused on the homeless
	Very limited set of services provided to the homeless
	No shelter for homeless people in the capital
MK (North Macedonia)	No explicit focus on homelessness
	Lack of capital expenditure related to housing; only emergency/temporary solutions are offered
	No comprehensive and long-term support provided
RS (Serbia)	The most vulnerable people, the primary homeless, are the least protected under the current welfare policies. Presently, there are only temporary accommodation services, no permanent solutions for homelessness
	The current social housing policy does not properly cover the housing needs of the vulnerable groups. It is mainly oriented towards the creation of a non-profit housing market, to facilitate the procurement of housing units under more favourable conditions
	Inadequate transparency and accountability on the use of the funds earmarked to fight HHE. This is also one of the reasons for the inefficiency of the programmes implemented
TR (Turkey)	There is no strategy defining the problem and proposing policies
	Social assistance for HHE is very limited. There is a lack of the necessary psychosocial support to lift homeless people from their current state
	Lack of preventive and curative measures addressing drug addiction and mental health problems
XK (Kosovo)	Overall, the central and local institutions consistently fail to comply with legal requirements to assess the housing needs of vulnerable populations and to deliver adequate assistance to them
	Lack of accurate and reliable data on housing needs in each municipality
	Homelessness is neither clearly defined nor fully measured and addressed. Absence of a national strategy on homelessness

Source: ESPN national reports.

Table B3: Priorities for improvement in service provision for homeless people

Country	Priorities
AT (Austria)	Preventing rising housing costs
	Safeguarding affordability via adequate transfers to low-income households
	Providing high-quality services to people who become homeless
BE (Belgium)	Developing a longer-term streamlining strategy with regard to data collection
	Developing a more structural preventative policy approach which does not focus only on the most visible groups of homeless
	Expanding substantially the social housing sector
	Redistributing the current housing stock, favouring those on the lowest incomes and the most vulnerable groups
BG (Bulgaria)	Establishing a unified national strategy for homelessness prevention
	Adopting a National Housing Strategy
	Simplifying the administrative procedures at the municipal level to provide access to services and to create accommodation alternatives and legalisation on existing buildings suitable for habitation
	Expanding the number, type and funding of services to support homeless people
CY (Cyprus)	Exchanging information with other countries (FEANTSA toolkit) and developing HHE indicators based on relevant international experience (ETHOS-Light)
	Formulating an official national definition of HHE
	Designing a national strategy for homelessness
	Raising social awareness
	Considering the use of EU funds
CZ (Czechia)	Adopting the Social Housing Act and creating the corresponding financial instruments
	Defining the role of municipalities in meeting citizens' need for housing and in enforcing the right to housing, while providing them with adequate support in terms of appropriate financial instruments
	Promptly implementing these Housing First and rapid re-housing instruments (possibly under the Social Services Act), based on the experience with the pilot rapid re-housing projects
	Increasing legislative protection against evictions, while also strengthening social work with debtors with a view to debt re-payment, and implementing debt-relief instruments on a greater scale
	Developing a healthcare service system for the homeless that combines street medicine, ambulatory healthcare, shelter-based and follow-up care, and prevention
DE (Germany)	Developing an effective strategy to reduce the housing shortage, especially low-cost housing for low-income groups
	Ensuring uniform nationwide statistics and reporting on housing emergencies
	Introducing uniform forms and standards for homeless support at municipal level, in which all actors are involved cooperatively
DK (Denmark)	Providing more adequate and affordable housing, i.e. small flats with a cheap rent and, for young persons, preferably situated in cities with education and job offers
	Introducing personal coordinators for homeless persons to help navigate the system and coordinate measures. Preferably, this could be part of the on-going work to revise social law to make it more holistic
	Allocating more money to municipalities for socially vulnerable people, and to the regions for psychiatric healthcare, as these budgets are underfunded
	Using support methods more often and for more groups, in order to prevent homelessness
	Creating housing provision (from homeless hostels to temporary accommodation), which is safer, more responsive and respectful to the growing group of young people, women and elderly with care needs
EE (Estonia)	Developing further quality guidelines for social services, to unify the provision and quality of the social services

Country	Priorities
	Improving information about the services available and proactively providing the services for those in need
	Developing a specific strategy addressing homelessness or addressing homelessness as part of a broader strategy
EL (Greece)	Improving governance in the public housing policy area
	Designing and developing a comprehensive strategy for tackling HHE, which should be accompanied by an integrated strategic Action Plan with clear-cut priorities
	Setting up proper arrangements for the collection of data on HHE so as to allow a better understanding of the phenomenon and continuous monitoring of the situation
	Strengthening research, especially with regard to the factors generating and perpetuating HHE
	Ensuring that the strategic Action Plan is supported by a public investment plan, with adequate national funding along with EU financial support
ES (Spain)	Commitment to social investment, at central government level, by the Ministries of Housing and of Health and Social Services
	Approving a National Action Plan with the support of all institutional and social actors and the corresponding financial support
	Updating the data from the Survey of Homeless People, also including the survey on people who do not attend the centres for homeless people
	Strengthening the Housing First approach
	Improving institutional coordination
FI (Finland)	Increasing the share of subsidised and ARA-financed flats from the current 20% of all new flats to 30%
	Supporting former prisoners and young people who are finishing alcohol or drug abuse rehabilitation, helping them to find accommodation
	Building more subsidised housing and producing more affordable housing for low-income people
	Improving the asylum-seeking process and, if necessary, granting permission to reside in the country for humanitarian reasons
FR (France)	A collective effort to give credibility to the Housing First strategy, in terms of both image and tools
	Stop using hotel rooms to accommodate families with children
	Extend ranked allocation system for social housing
	Open up rental accommodation to non-national families whose administrative applications are pending
	Stop evictions from slums without a rehousing procedure
HR (Croatia)	Agree on a broader definition of homelessness, bearing in mind the ETHOS-Light approach
	Improve the monitoring of project implementation by independent experts selected through open calls for proposals
	Draw up a Social Housing Strategy addressing the issues of HHE
	Ensure that the Social Housing Strategy comprises social investment in accommodation facilities and training of staff with, as needed, the recruitment of professionals to provide the needed service
	Support organisations involved in the implementation of the Housing First model as an innovation
HU (Hungary)	Re-introduce and significantly increase home maintenance support
	Improve the quality of existing services and the existing infrastructure by, among other things, creating complex and accessible services for groups with special needs (the elderly, psychiatric patients, those with addiction problems, those with disabilities, and those leaving foster care or prison)
	Secure social/community housing options at least for some special population groups, e.g. families with children, and provide housing-led provision with floating support services
	Regulate the rental market to alleviate affordability problems

Country	Priorities
	Scale-up Housing First programmes considerably
IE (Ireland)	Make clear and inclusive definitions and full enumeration of each a priority for the future
	Prevention of HHE itself needs to be a focus of policy to enhance homeless and general housing support services, in particular to focus on prevention-oriented activities
	Stronger rent control measures and regulation of the private-rented housing sector, especially with regard to tenant rights
	Increase the supply of public/social housing, including allowing local authorities and approved housing bodies to combine their property portfolios for the purpose of leveraging finance to increase their capacity to build and manage social housing
IT (Italy)	Improve the overall governance of this policy field, also developing a monitoring strategy. This may require the creation of a national agency, acting as a "control room" responsible for monitoring effective implementation of the strategy
	Expand the stock of public and social housing, also through the effective restoration of dwellings in a precarious condition
	(Re)introduce a fund to support low income tenants, and able to cover an adequate share of poor families
	Invest adequate resources in hiring and training social workers specialised in integration of the homeless
	Guarantee all homeless people (both nationals and foreigners) effective access to anti-poverty monetary benefits – especially the minimum income scheme
LT (Lithuania)	Extending municipalities' access to social housing, alongside improvements in the provision of rent compensation and increased subletting of private rented housing by municipalities
	Developing counselling services for preventing debt accumulation and mechanisms for debt relief
	Addressing systematically stigmatisation of and discrimination against homeless people
	Putting in place new models of service provision, such as supported housing, housing-led and Housing First services
	Supporting new models of service provision by municipalities or NGOs, by means of a national programme
LU (Luxembourg)	Fighting against the steady price increase in the housing market and building more social housing Binding social housing quotas for municipalities
	Basing the definition of homelessness on the ETHOS-Light typology
	Providing people leaving prisons with half-way houses and fully implementing the Housing First concept in line with international standards
	Establishing a steering group, with representatives of all players, for the monitoring of the "National strategy against HHE 2013-2020"
	Establishing a comprehensive common database of all HHE services provided
LV (Latvia)	Developing a uniform housing policy, taking particular care to address the problem of insufficient social housing, and developing affordable quality housing support mechanisms (state and local government support in building rental housing/ state guaranteed support for groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, etc.)
	Expanding considerably the range of services offered to the homeless, moving to a comprehensive range of social services to resolve the problem of homelessness
	Increasing state/ local government material support in covering rental and utility payments for the most vulnerable groups
	Ensuring that national and local governments earmark fiscal funds for the development of the housing stock, in particular those aimed at promoting the accessibility of social housing for the most vulnerable groups of the population
MT (Malta)	Establishing a one-stop-shop providing integrated care
	Adopting an outreach system whereby persons who really need help are noted and assisted as early on as possible

Country	Priorities
	Sustaining the building of adequate housing units that are affordable for average-income families; meeting social housing demands
	Fighting against property inflation
NL (Netherlands)	Adopting Housing First initiatives
	Enhancing cooperation between local stakeholders (municipalities, housing associations, care organisations and NGOs)
	Moving from protected housing solutions to people living independently and receiving ambulatory flexible support. More focus is needed on new ways of supporting people while they live in their own house
PL (Poland)	Changing emphasis of financing and regulation from a shelter-based to a housing-led system, starting from a well-financed and monitored broader deinstitutionalisation strategy focusing on homeless people (among other groups)
	Increasing financial subsidies to social and municipal housing, and making it easier for municipalities to obtain them
	Monitoring the effects of the changes in the social housing law adopted in 2018
	Devising and implementing coordination measures to increase cooperation between different stakeholders, including the authorities and social service providers interested in preventing homelessness and helping the homeless into their own accommodation
	Organising a multi-stakeholder forum to prepare a programme to develop an evidence-based approach. This should improve the quality of policies to reduce HHE, including better homelessness censuses and better quality of the administrative data
PT (Portugal)	Improving the system for collecting information on HHE
	Promoting greater emphasis on the provision of high-intensity support services and housing-led solutions, within the scope of the strategy and encouraged by the recent approval of new measures for housing support
	Ensuring that the national strategy has enough resources (human, financial, etc.) to ensure its effective implementation as well as the assessment of its results
	Comprehensively integrating HHE into the new basic law on housing
	Ensuring that HHE are carefully considered in any efforts to correct imbalances in the housing market
RO (Romania)	Developing a national strategy to guide and coordinate the efforts of various institutional actors and NGOs
	Amending and enriching the legislative framework regulating public/ social housing and the re-definition of insecure, minimal, precarious and improper housing conditions as well as of housing exclusion (risks), in order to open up financing and intervention opportunities
	Developing a package of possible/desirable intervention programmes/tools, to improve housing conditions in marginalised and informal communities. This could create an important legal reference framework for any regional/ local initiative
	Re-thinking financing mechanisms and financial leverage in order to increase the sustainability of service development and investment in public housing
	Developing a comprehensive housing benefit system, to increase affordability and prevent deterioration of housing conditions
SE (Sweden)	Adopting a new integrated homelessness strategy
	Increasing considerably the offer of affordable rental housing available to citizens
	Ensuring that the social services take greater account of the situation of children in relation to preventing evictions, the type of housing that is provided and how the support is designed and delivered. Children's stories and experiences should also be listened to more carefully
	Improving monitoring of the effectiveness of existing services
	Shifting from service-led to housing-led services, including scaling up the Housing First model
SI (Slovenia)	Establishing a systemic funding source for non-profit housing
	Establishing a legal obligation (for instance, in the Housing Act) for the local communities to provide a certain number (according to the population) of suitable housing units and regularly publish calls for allocation of non-profit housing

Country	Priorities
	Introducing a system of single recording of users, which would allow for more or less unique identification and tracking through the system, at least for that part of the programmes where users are not allowed to remain anonymous
	Financing surveys to evaluate the extent of homelessness, the characteristics of homeless people and their need for support
SK (Slovakia)	Launching regular collections of data on homelessness
	Establishing an interdepartmental task force to prepare a comprehensive approach to homelessness
	Making social housing a more inclusive and more open system
	Introducing new incentives for municipalities, to motivate them to develop the social housing sector and use existing state support tools
	Creating the conditions for experimental testing of innovative ideas
UK (United Kingdom)	Increasing funding and monitoring of local authority housing prevention and relief activities and monitoring for good practice
	Reversing fully or partially changes made to housing allowances since 2012
	Developing more housing, particularly more affordable housing, esp. in areas of high demand
	Addressing other structural problems including poor rights for private renters and the tax treatment of housing property
AL (Albania)	Additional steps and resources are needed for the identification of homeless individuals, in particular those who often may not have the information or ability to apply
	Establishing an electronic systematic data collection system and train officials on how to use it as well as how to conduct needs assessments
	Putting in place a horizontal coordination of and a holistic approach to HHE
	Ensuring strong horizontal coordination between ministries, as well as with local government and other service providers, for successful implementation of housing policies
	Strengthening local capacities of data collection and management of social housing
BA (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Amending the current legislation. Homelessness should not be defined as vagrancy or idleness, and should no longer be penalised. Legislation should set out the different types of support available to different categories of homeless persons, depending on the nature of their situation. Special legislation should be adopted on homelessness which addresses its causes and improves the housing situation of homeless people
	Developing strategies to tackle homelessness which take an inter-sectoral approach, including social protection and healthcare, housing policy, employment policy, migration, human rights, minority policies, etc.
	Increasing resources to systematic data collection and monitoring efforts
ME (Montenegro)	Conducting comprehensive field research on homeless people, including both quantitative and qualitative perspectives
	Designing a strategy directly focused on the issue of homelessness, or including relevant policy responses in existing strategic documents, based on research findings
	Creating an official register of homeless people, with precise numbers and other important data on them, at both national and local level
	Urgently opening a shelter for homeless people in the capital of the country
	Opening free public baths that could be used by homeless people not living in a shelter
MK (North Macedonia)	Stipulating a legal definition of homelessness in all its forms, and listing measures to tackle it in the main legislative acts, including: the Housing Law, the Social Protection Law and the Law on Social Entrepreneurship
	Increasing the financing for social housing, and redefining social housing provision and the associated financial support to target homeless people
	Encouraging a more pro-active role for local municipalities in the provision of holistic and comprehensive support (educational, health and social services) to prevent homelessness and support homeless people
	Ensuring that all children staying in temporary accommodation for homeless people have access to education and adequate educational support

Country	Priorities
	Piloting the Housing First approach with homeless persons, through the provision of social housing and associated comprehensive support from the employment, education, health and social protection system
RS (Serbia)	Establishing a central information system which can receive data from the local level on all categories of homeless people
	Developing analytical programmes that will respond to the requirements of all stakeholders.
	Including HHE issues in the new Social Protection Law and in the new Social Protection Strategy. Special consideration should be given to preventive measures tackling HHE
	Preparing the legal acts and regulations responsively to the needs and socio-economic situations of the most vulnerable groups in the population, and including provisions which will enable them to have equal access to the available housing services
	Increasing the capacities of Roma NGOs to reach the most vulnerable Roma households and supporting their inclusion in social housing programmes
TR (Turkey)	Supporting NGOs in the short term, given their experience with HHE
	Developing a comprehensive strategy instead of ad-hoc solutions which are put in place when the problem becomes life-threatening
	Developing policies to address the housing problems faced by Syrian refugees
XK (Kosovo)	Ensuring that invisible vulnerable groups are included in the new Law on Social Housing
	Improving weak and non-transparent procedures for the selection of social housing beneficiaries

Source: ESPN national reports.

ANNEX C: REFERENCES

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ANNEX D: PRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK – APRIL 2019

ESPN Network Management Team and Network Core Team

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) is managed jointly by the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), the independent research company APPLICA and the European Social Observatory (OSE).

The ESPN Network Management Team is responsible for the overall supervision and coordination of the ESPN. It consists of six members:

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