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PRESS RELEASE

**Reducing the EU Cohesion Policy budget is shooting Europe in its own foot:  
6 ways to avoid this historical mistake**

*Housing Europe, the European Federation representing more than 43,000 public, cooperative and social housing associations and FEANTSA, the voice of over 130 organisations fighting against homelessness, explain why the proposed 7% reduction of the EU Cohesion Policy budget will exacerbate the current housing challenge facing the EU.*

The positive socio-economic and environmental impact of the Cohesion Policy is undoubtable. Since 2009, the Structural Funds have contributed to the improvement of housing conditions, and therefore the quality of people's lives, as Housing Europe has reported in detail for the first time in its recent publication on the implementation of Structural Funds on affordable housing.

The future EU Cohesion Policy must further support these positive experiences and help Europe respond to its housing and homelessness challenge. These challenges are not just words. Solid evidence provided both by the 'State of Housing in the EU' report and the annual 'Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe' published by Housing Europe and FEANTSA respectively shows that not all citizens benefit from the positive impact of Cohesion Policy. In order not to leave anyone behind, simplicity in accessing funds for those engaged on the ground will be key.

The future the EU budget should be used as a lever to improve policies and services for the homeless, increase production of affordable housing solutions and encourage Member States to shift from "managing" to "ending" homelessness. Reducing the available budget will result in an unfair Cohesion Policy which will be like shooting Europe's own feet. 6 ways to avoid this historical mistake:

1. In all EU regions, even the ones with a high GDP/capita, the lack of and demand for good quality and affordable services, including housing, require the support of Cohesion Policy. Excluding some of them is undermining the very nature of this fundamental EU policy.
2. The possibility to blend grants and loans (Structural Funds, EIB loans, Juncker Plan, etc.) is vital. Extraordinary challenges call for maximum flexibility.
3. The **Partnership principle** needs to be further strengthened. The full involvement of affordable housing providers is needed in the preparation process of the Partnership Agreement and of the Operational Programmes.
4. Monitoring should be focused on quality and impact delivery.
5. In order to sustain the impact of EU funding on employment, economic and social inclusion, **holding up ex ante conditionality** on non-discrimination, gender equality and disability under the relevant section of the Commission proposal for the Common Provision Regulation **is crucial**.
6. Measures supporting social inclusion of people in the most deprived situations, rather than just meeting their most basic needs, are essential to ensure *no one is left behind*.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- If you are interested in a quote or an interview, please contact
  - Michalis Goudis, Communications Director at Housing Europe  
[michalis.goudis@housingeurope.eu](mailto:michalis.goudis@housingeurope.eu)
  - Emma Nolan, Communications Officer at FEANTSA [emma.nolan@feantsa.org](mailto:emma.nolan@feantsa.org)
- You may access:
  - The State of Housing in the EU 2017 <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1000/the-state-of-housing-in-the-eu-2017>
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe  
<http://www.feantsa.org/en/report/2018/03/21/the-second-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2017>
- Detailed position of Housing Europe on the future EU Cohesion Policy  
<http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1110/reducing-the-budget-of-cohesion-policy-is-a-risk-we-cannot-afford-to-take>
- FEANTSA Post 2020 MFF: call on the EU to stand up for homeless people  
<http://www.feantsa.org/en/feantsa-position/2018/01/05/feantsa-position-post-2020-multiannual-financial-framework-feantsa-calls-on-the-eu-to-stand-up-for-homeless-people>
- Housing Europe is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing. Since 1988 it's a network of 45 national & regional federations gathering 43.000 housing providers in 24 countries. Together they manage over 26 million homes, about 11% of existing dwellings in Europe | [www.housingeurope.eu](http://www.housingeurope.eu)
- FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. It's the only European NGO focusing exclusively on the fight against homelessness with the ultimate goal an end to homelessness in Europe. Established in 1989, FEANTSA brings together non-profit services that support homeless people in Europe. It has over 130 member organisations from 30 countries, including 28 Member States. Most are national or regional federations | [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)