### Key Statistics

A survey of homelessness in Hungary is conducted every year on the 3rd of February. This has been run for 14 years and involves a range of researchers, municipalities and NGO service providers on a voluntary basis. Initially, it covered only Budapest but has now expanded to a growing number of municipalities, now 53. The Third of February Homeless Survey is not a census of all homeless people, nor is it a tool to estimate the number of homeless people. The survey only covers those people who are in touch with shelters or outreach teams at the time of the survey.

At national level, there are registers of certain types of homeless services provided under the Social Care Act but there are a number of limitations regarding the quality of the data.

On the 3rd of February 2012, 9,793 homeless people took part in the survey. This included:
- People living in public space/outdoors (ETHOS 1.1): 3,087
- People staying in hostels (ETHOS 2.1 and 3.1): 6,706

### Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People

The number of homeless people captured by the 3rd February survey increased from 8,641 in 2012 to 9,793 in 2013. This is not an indication of the total number of homeless people.

### Change in Profile of Homeless People

According to the 3rd February Survey, there has been an increase in the number of people becoming homeless due to financial reasons or insecure housing. The percentage of homeless people with a permanent health condition or disability has reached 53% among those living in Budapest and 47% among those in the countryside. 61% of those sleeping in hostels in Budapest had a permanent health condition or disability. 23% of homeless people have been called Roma at one point in their life.

### National Strategy

There is currently no national strategy in Hungary. A proposal for a strategy was developed in 2008. It was the first document that attempted to address homelessness in a comprehensive way in Hungary. The proposal was drafted by two well-known experts in the field and was commissioned by Miklós Vecsei, the Ministerial Commissioner for Homeless Affairs under the previous Government. Until now, it has not received any high-level backing and has disappeared from the agenda at present. Nonetheless, there is regular consultation with social service providers through a consultative committee and there might be the possibility to revive the initiative in the future. At the moment, there seems to be little perspective for a comprehensive national strategy on homelessness.

1. Last updated January 2014
### Governance

The Ministry of National Resources funds social services. Local governments are responsible for providing social services and do this through contracts with NGOs or faith-based service providers. Municipalities of a certain size are legally obliged to provide certain homeless services. The vocational and infrastructural conditions necessary for institutions to obtain an operation license are managed by Government Offices in each region. A Consultative Council on Homeless Affairs comprising different social stakeholders (Government, social services providers, community organisations and others) was established in 2006. However, it is not called together on a regular basis, so it does not seem to work as a tool for consultation between the government and homeless service providers.

### Targeted Prevention

There are some specific measures for preventing evictions. Some local authorities run debt-management services for families facing arrears in order to prevent eviction. There is a legal duty to provide these services in settlements with a population of over forty thousand inhabitants, as well as in the districts of Budapest.

This year the eviction moratorium ends at the end of April. It started a bit earlier than usual (5 November) and lasts longer.

There are no specific provisions to prevent homelessness as a result of institutional release. Homeless service providers provide ad-hoc interventions based on local conditions.

### Housing-Led Approaches

Housing-led approaches are not well developed in Hungary. The night shelter and hostel system is the predominant provision for homelessness. Temporary accommodation funding is being capped but this does not reflect parallel investment in more permanent solutions. There has been some testing and development of supported housing. Overall, there are about 1000 formerly homeless people living in the private rental sector with some form of support. This mostly concerns projects funded under the European Social Fund that combine housing, employment and training elements. There are about 20 such projects throughout the country.

An important initiative run by the Public Foundation for the Homeless is targeting rough sleepers with complex needs through a call entitled "Off the Street". The Foundation thus supported 18 projects in the country in early 2012, targeting 209 homeless people, of which 167 people managed to change their lives in a positive way. Some of the projects take a housing-led approach by placing people directly into housing.

### Quality of Homeless Services

The legal framework regulating quality in homeless services stipulates that no more than 15 people should share a room and there must be at least 4 square metres per person in a room. There should be four social workers and mental health co-workers per 50 beds in a homeless shelter and three social-care providers. For nursing and rehabilitation centres there are also guidelines concerning medical staff.

### Remarks on Research

The most comprehensive research project delivering data on homelessness is the annual survey described above. Data from this was incorporated into the 2008 proposal for a strategy. Due to budget cuts, the 2012 survey was conducted voluntarily by the data collectors who were willing to continue supporting the process.

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EU funds have been mobilised for research on quality in homeless services.

In 2011 a special issue of a Hungarian social policy periodical *Esély* was dedicated to homeless issues, focusing on a review of policy developments in Europe and overseas.

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<th>Remarks on Budget Evolution</th>
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<td>The Hungarian state channels approximately 30 million EUR per year into tackling homelessness through a combination of normative and grant-funding. In terms of normative funding, the nominal amount per capita has either declined or stayed unchanged for the last 5 years for most types of services. Homeless service providers must settle for fewer and fewer resources to fund their services. Local government also funds services but this contribution varies across the country. In the case of Budapest, the additional funding to NGOs operating in the city has been withdrawn. Moreover, the normative funding of day centres has been halved, significantly affecting the financial resources of many homeless service providers. An estimated 10% cut in funding for transitional accommodation has been observed due to recent changes to the regulation that defines the amount of funding. In 2012, the funding for street outreach services shifted from being part of the normative scheme to falling under the category of tendered services. Funding for homeless services has also been negatively affected by a decree made by the Government in 2011 declaring the abolition of the “Public Solidarity Foundation”. Finally, the take up of EU funds is greatly hampered by administrative burdens.</td>
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<th>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<td>A process of criminalisation of homelessness has taken place in Hungary over recent years. This started with the Building Act, which was modified in November 2010 to regulate the use of public space. On the 18th May 2011, Budapest City Council issued a decree that made sleeping on the street an offence and subjected people sleeping rough to fines of €200 and detention. On the 10th November 2011, the Hungarian Parliament voted a law which allows for the imprisonment of or €600 fine for those found “guilty” of sleeping rough twice in a six month period. There have also been reductions in social benefits and eligibility criteria have been made more restrictive. The period of unemployment benefit is now reduced to 3 months. The total budget for benefits has been reduced.</td>
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