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Lithuania

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<p>Key Statistics</p>	<p>The department of statistics (Statistics Lithuania) collects data on homelessness every 10 years within the framework of the general population census. In 2011, the census instructions defined homeless people as those who have no permanent place of residence and no money to rent or buy at least a basic lodging, and for this reason they live on the streets (ETHOS 1), in places not intended for human habitation, in institutions for temporary living (night shelters (ETHOS 2.1 and 3.1), crisis centres and shelters for mothers and children (ETHOS 4.1). The census recorded 857 homeless people on census night. However, this is in fact not a very useful indication of the number of homeless people in Lithuania as it only captured people living in institutions in 2 municipalities.</p> <p>Statistics Lithuania recorded about 4,957 homeless people on a given night in Lithuania in 2012. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2,447 persons were living in shelters for homeless people (ETHOS 2.1 and 3.1); ○ 2,510 persons were living in crisis centres and shelters for mothers and children (ETHOS 4.1). <p>From February 2012, a database is being maintained in Vilnius, in which people who are recognised as homeless and/or begging and using social support services are registered. 1,294 homeless persons were registered in this data base at the end of 2013.</p>
<p>Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People</p>	<p>Homelessness has been steadily increasing over the past years. As an indication, the number of residents in shelters for homeless people increased by 7.2% from 2011 to 2012, and by 25% since 2005. The number of people residing in night shelters increased from 2,142 in 2011 (annual prevalence) to 2,447 in 2012 and the number of people residing in crisis centres and shelters for mothers and children increased from 1,880 in 2011 to 2,510 in 2012.</p> <p>In 2012 more than 31 thousand households, which represents about 70,000 persons were waiting for a social housing, which is 4% more than in 2011. Only about 3% got the social housing in 2012. Each year waiting lists for social housing increase with 1680 applicants, which is by 3.4 times more than in 2004.</p>
<p>Change in Profile of Homeless People</p>	<p>There is some evidence of increasing homelessness amongst women with children in recent years.</p>
<p>National Strategy</p>	<p>National Strategy</p> <p>There is no specific integrated strategy for tackling homelessness in Lithuania. There is a housing strategy with goals that are indirectly linked to homelessness such as the expansion of housing options to all social groups.</p>

¹ Last updated January 2014

	<p>Vilnius has adopted a program on homelessness for the period of 2013-2018, covering accommodation and reintegration.</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labor has the main responsibility for issues relating to homelessness. Competence for the housing sector is horizontally dispersed across seven ministries (Environment, Finance, Social Security and Labour, Economy, Agriculture, Justice and Interior). The Ministry of the Environment leads the formulation of housing policy. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring the provision of social services. Under the Constitution, the municipalities are autonomous in respect to the development of local policy. Hence, there are regional disparities in the quality of social services, the infrastructure of services etc.</p>
<p>Targeted Prevention</p>	<p>There are no specific service interventions to prevent evictions. The Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (18th July 2000 No VIII-1864, Vilnius) provides some protection in specific circumstances. For example, in the case of buildings owned by the state, municipalities or legal persons being brought into a condition of dilapidation or rendered unfit for habitation due to natural disasters, fire or technical wear and tear; or where the dwelling is subject to demolition or redevelopment; or is not maintained after capital repair, alternative accommodation should be secured for the person.</p> <p>The policy framework does not provide very much specific support to people leaving institutions. Those leaving prison only receive a small lump-sum benefit and access to catering services. Those leaving social and psychological convalescence homes are eligible to be provided with accommodation in shelters for the homeless. Young people leaving state care institutions are not generally guaranteed housing solutions. There are a few special houses for young people and they do receive a lump-sum benefit.</p>
<p>Housing-Led Approaches</p>	<p>The Government of Lithuania has no special housing policy or regulation for homeless individuals. Homeless people can only apply for places in night shelters and apply for social housing. A proposal has been made by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour on a social housing law. It is proposed that families could rent a house on the private rental market and be partially reimbursed for their rental payments by the government. It is also proposed that people, who have been live in properties social housing since 2003, could have the possibility to buy their rental unit.</p>
<p>Quality of Homeless Services</p>	<p>There is a common hygiene norm which sets health and safety requirements for accommodation services (not specifically for homelessness services) – “Health and safety requirements for accommodation services”. It applies to accommodation services provided by legal entities and natural persons. This hygiene norm is obligatory for all providers of accommodation services, as well as for designers of premises where such services are provided, and for the controlling institutions thereof. Providers of accommodation services shall: 1. provide safe services to the consumers; 2. provide consumers with all necessary information related to the quality and safety of services; 3. inform consumers immediately about changes to the conditions of accommodation services, quality or health safety; 4. in the event that it is discovered that the provision of services may endanger the health of customers, provision of services shall be immediately interrupted and measures taken to address the problem.</p> <p>Night shelters in Vilnius can serve as a case-study giving some insight into the quality of shelter services. In Vilnius, there are 3 homeless shelters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The first municipal shelter is low-threshold. People sleep in one large hall – generally,

	<p>half of them sleep in beds and others on mattresses. This shelter has around 65 places but during the cold season around 110 people spend the night there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The second municipal shelter is divided into four floors, with a floor for each of the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ homeless people with disabilities, ○ homeless people with addictions and/or categorised as engaging in “risk behaviour”, ○ single mothers with children ○ families <p>There are 3-4 people per sleeping room.</p> ○ At the Vilnius Archdiocese Caritas shelter for the homeless, 3-4 females share a room, and 7-8 males. 	
<p>Remarks on Research</p>	<p>Homeless policy is not highly evidence-based. Links between research and policy-making are not well-developed in the area of homelessness. In 2013 one scientific study (doctoral dissertation) was published on homelessness (Indriliūnaitė R. Homelessness in Lithuania: the survival practices of the residents of a homeless shelter).</p>	
<p>Remarks on Budget Evolution</p>	<p>There is no specific budget for homelessness interventions. Funds allocated to the housing programmes and the housing policy implementation agencies are managed by the Ministry of Finance. Social services are financed by municipal funds, specific grants allocated to municipalities, and personal contributions paid for social services.</p>	
<p>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Over the past five years, there has been a strengthening of the homeless service system.</p> <p>Independent living homes were established in Vilnius for homeless with mental health and intellectual disabilities and for women with children.</p> <p>The deinstitutionalisation programme was adopted.</p> <p>A proposal on social housing law is initiated.</p>		<p>There is a trend towards coercive approaches. The City of Klaipėda like Vilnius has also prohibited begging and giving money to beggars in the street. Temporary or permanent rough sleeping or living under the balconies of tenement houses is also prohibited according to the city regulations.</p> <p>There is a lack of various services for homeless people.</p>