



FEANTSA

FEANTSA RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES 2012

June 2012

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National Reform Programmes 2012 and the Europe2020 poverty target:

Investment in homelessness reduction emerging as a priority in the Europe2020 growth strategy

FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People. The more than 120 members of FEANTSA come from 30 European countries and are non-governmental organisations which provide a wide range of social services to homeless people including accommodation, social, health and employment support. The research branch of FEANTSA, the European Observatory on Homelessness, publishes a wide range of research for policy purposes. FEANTSA is the only major European network that focuses on homelessness, and works closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament in the framework of the social Open Method of Coordination and the European Platform against Poverty. As a member of the Social Platform, Social Services Europe and the European Anti-Poverty network, FEANTSA works to promote an EU social policy which has a positive impact on the lives of EU citizens.

This brief response from FEANTSA aims to highlight the types of measures to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion outlined in the National Reform Programmes 2012 (see Europe2020 [website](#) and extracts in Annex II), and to formulate recommendations for follow-up at EU level, and for the next round of National Reform Programmes in 2013.

¹ NB At the time of writing, not all National Reform Programmes are available in English. This assessment is based on NRPs available in English in May 2012.

I. The social impact of the crisis

For the first time, Europe has set a target to reduce poverty by lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020, which together with the other social targets on employment, education and training are meant to ensure a balanced economic and social approach. The poverty target is one of [five key targets](#) set in 2010 as part of the European Union's economic and employment strategy (referred to as Europe2020) for this decade, a strategy to be delivered through annual [National Reform Programmes](#) (NRPs) which are based on [10 broad guidelines](#) for economic and employment policies:

Guideline 1: Ensuring the quality and the sustainability of public finances

Guideline 2: Addressing macroeconomic imbalances

Guideline 3: Reducing imbalances in the euro area

Guideline 4: Optimising support for R&D and innovation, strengthening the knowledge triangle and unleashing the potential of the digital economy

Guideline 5: Improving resource efficiency and reducing greenhouse gases

Guideline 6: Improving the business and consumer environment and modernising the industrial base

Guideline 7: Increasing labour market participation and reducing structural unemployment

Guideline 8: Developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs, promoting job quality and lifelong learning

Guideline 9: Improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education

Guideline 10: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

National targets set and measures taken under Guideline 10 « Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty » must be seen in the light of the deepening crisis, as European governments struggle to save the Euro and decide on budgetary cuts in a wide range of areas including in social services and various social benefits (including housing benefits).

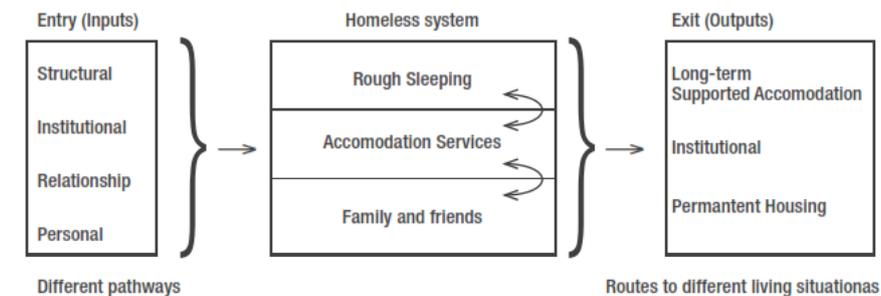
The social impact of the current economic crisis should not be underestimated. In a context where homelessness is on the rise and vulnerability to homelessness is also increasing (see [Annual Growth Survey 2012](#), FEANTSA 2011 [paper](#) on the impact of the crisis), more than half the national governments of the EU have decided to respond to this phenomenon with targeted measures in their 2012 NRP which will undoubtedly contribute to achieving the EU poverty target. These countries include: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. These countries focus mainly on people suffering from severe exclusion, but also increasingly on young people, well-educated people, families and migrants facing homelessness. These “new” homeless place additional pressure on existing services, and countries have sent a clear message through the 2012 NRPs that they are now investing in strengthening responsiveness to these new needs. This trend is reflected in the [resolution](#) adopted by the European Parliament in September 2011 calling for an EU strategy on homelessness.

Twelve countries explicitly highlight specific measures to tackle homelessness in their 2012 National Reform Programme (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Finland, Hungary, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, UK). Other countries do not explicitly mention homelessness, but highlight measures that have an impact on homelessness such as housing or urban policies which aim to provide access to housing for all (Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Spain), measures to tackle exclusion of vulnerable groups (Denmark, Ireland), measures to improve quality of social services (Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia), and measures to tackle long-term unemployment (Austria, Estonia, Germany). Finally, there are a number of countries which **do not** explicitly mention homelessness and housing exclusion in their NRP, but which we know do actively tackle the phenomenon of homelessness or are taking important steps to tackle the phenomenon (Denmark, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, and Portugal).² Moreover, these countries are actively involved in European exchanges on various aspects of homelessness policies (research and data, definitions, target groups, social policy experimentation, funding).

2 See more here : <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=1169>

II Key messages on homelessness emerging from the 2012 National Reform Programmes³

Measures in the 2012 NRPs cover the full spectrum of homelessness and housing exclusion - a complex, dynamic and differentiated process with different routes and exits, or “pathways”, for different individuals and groups:



Source: Edgar et al. (2007: 191).

>>Measures for people at the extreme end of housing exclusion

The ETHOS typology classifies homeless people according to four main living situations of rooflessness; houselessness; living in insecure housing; and living in inadequate housing (see full typology in Annex I).

In terms of rooflessness and houselessness, some NRPs refer to steps taken to develop an integrated homelessness strategy - hence joining the other EU countries which have a national homelessness strategy - by carrying out research and collecting data (Bulgaria, Czech Republic) and developing inter-ministerial cooperation (Greece, Luxembourg, Sweden). Countries are also proposing concrete measures to reduce long-term homelessness (Finland, UK-Scotland), to improve the quality of shelters and accommodation for homeless people (France), to increase the stock of self-contained housing for homeless people (France, Poland), to facilitate access to mainstream housing for homeless people (Belgium), to test and develop alternative forms of housing and support which can lead to more independent living (Belgium, Hungary, Luxembourg), and general measures to empower homeless people, to integrate the labour market (Slovenia).

These measures explicitly refer to homelessness, sending a clear message about the need to focus on the most excluded in society as well as people closer to the poverty line when aiming to reach the Europe2020 poverty target – this should indeed be supported by the EU in order to avoid any creaming in social services. The drive for this political choice is not only about upholding fundamental rights but also about the need to keep people off the streets in support services where they incur less costs for society (justice system, police, psychiatric care, hospitals, etc) and where they can have a stable living situation enabling them to actively contribute to society rather than live on the margins of society. Whereas some countries still focus on shelter provision for people at the extreme end of housing exclusion, other countries are channelling resources towards more permanent forms of (supported) housing. It is important, however, to note that the 2012 NRPs cover only *part* of the existing measures to tackle homelessness which have developed over the last decade through transnational cooperation in the framework of the [social Open Method of Coordination](#).

³ There are no references in the text of this report, but the extracts from the NRPs in Annex II highlight the measures which are mentioned in the text.

>>Addressing the social impact of the crisis and the « new » homeless

Many of the national measures on homelessness in the 2012 NRPs are linked to wider housing measures, hence covering different types of housing exclusion, reflecting the increasing vulnerability to homelessness and the need to prevent homelessness as a result of the crisis. This includes taking emergency measures in response to the crisis to address « the rapidly deteriorating homelessness problem » (Greece), preventing evictions of families (Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden), implementing housing rights (Belgium, UK-Scotland), finding innovative ways to use empty homes (Belgium, Spain, UK), renovating the social housing stock (France, Belgium, Lithuania), making housing more affordable such as through use of rent subsidies, developing the social housing stock or finding solutions in the private housing market (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Spain, UK), developing mortgage indemnity schemes (Hungary, Netherlands, UK), and minimising the impact of fiscal consolidation on vulnerable groups (Ireland).

These measures generally aim to prevent homelessness, and demonstrate a tendency to use existing housing stock to find solutions (use of empty homes, facilitating access to private mainstream housing) rather than building new housing stock in these times of austerity. Rent and housing benefit schemes are key to support families, but only if the benefits truly reflect the rising costs of living linked to market prices and energy prices. The policy links between homelessness and housing exclusion are present in a number of NRPs (Belgium, France, Poland, Sweden, UK) which points to integrated working methods promoting access to housing for all. Unfortunately, these measures also imply that homelessness is becoming more of a mainstream and structural phenomenon which requires urgent action. Vulnerability to homelessness also concerns young people in some countries due to the lack of employment opportunities during the economic crisis – hence a number of countries have also developed measures to tackle youth unemployment (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, UK).

>>Employment of groups furthest from labour market and access to quality support services

Homelessness is not only a housing issue, but also linked to the policy areas of employment and health support.

Certain policies in the 2012 NRPs directly concern homeless people without mentioning them - this is the case for measures to tackle long-term unemployment. Many homeless people are long-term unemployed, and will therefore be affected to a certain extent by policies in the 2012 NRPs which focus on long-term unemployment and active inclusion (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Poland). These measures include setting up specific funds for education and training (Ireland), coaching (Estonia, Hungary, Romania), investing in social economy (Belgium, Poland, Romania, Slovenia), testing new ways of managing long-term unemployment through decentralised methods involving local authorities (Finland), developing social entrepreneurship of people at risk of social exclusion (Poland, Slovenia).

The general trend is to activate people who are long-term unemployed, which can be very positive for people who are having trouble leaving the vicious circle of homelessness. In economic terms, this is about reducing the long-term costs of social assistance and making sure everyone can directly contribute to sustainable growth. It is important to note that empowerment of homeless people is more than just skills development, securing a job or promoting self-employment. It is a holistic process that aims to enhance the capacity of people to be informed, make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. The development of the social economy sector in some countries will be important for supporting people with complex needs to actively participate in society. However, it is important to offer multiple entry points into the labour market. These entry points should range from low-threshold services such as life skills training, to supported and/or subsidised employment in the open labour market.

Some 2012 NRPs refer to measures to promote new partnerships between employment agencies and support services (Belgium, Finland, Sweden), developing new integrated models combining income support, employment supports and community welfare service (Ireland), measures aimed at improving the quality of social services (Czech Republic, Poland, Romania), deinstitutionalising the system of social services (Slovakia), building a safety net against social exclusion including access to basic services like housing (Greece), the creation of integrated social, healthcare and educational services for homeless people (Bulgaria, Luxembourg), and giving individuals and families facing multiple disadvantages the support and tools they need to turn their lives around (UK).

Such measures are key to empowering homeless people to be active in society, as stated very clearly in the 2008 European Commission [recommendation](#) on active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market. In general, social and health services have a crucial role to play, and have been highlighted in the recently published [Employment Package](#) (April 2012) as a sector with great potential for job creation.

>>Reaching the EU poverty target

The poverty target agreed in June 2010 by European Council is to promote social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and exclusion. The population is defined as the number of persons who are at risk of poverty and exclusion according to three indicators (at-risk-of poverty; material deprivation; jobless household), leaving Member States free to set their national targets on the basis of the most appropriate indicators, taking into account their national circumstances and priorities.

In some 2012 NRPs, the measures and targets focus very much on jobless households (Austria, Estonia, The Netherlands, Slovenia). Although the EU poverty target is very much geared towards employment and income as the main tools to get out of poverty and social exclusion, national governments also have the option of using the [material deprivation indicator](#) which is about constrained living conditions. Hence, many 2012 NRPs refer to more than just employment-related targets to reduce poverty, with additional targets for different sub-groups of people experiencing poverty including people experiencing homelessness, poor migrants, children, Roma, etc, or a focus on improving access to basic services, including housing.

However, sub-targets on homelessness are explicitly mentioned in only few 2012 NRPs (Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg), but we know that countries with national homeless strategies generally put forward clear and measurable targets to be achieved on homelessness, such as phasing out shelter accommodation and replacing it with long-term housing solutions (Finland), providing suitable support interventions for homeless people (The Netherlands), a legal right to settled accommodation for all unintentionally homeless households (Scotland), no one should be in emergency accommodation for more than 6 months (Ireland), as well as other targets like reducing the number of evictions and ensuring no stay in temporary housing for more than 3 months. We call on all Member States to integrate such achievable targets in future National Reform Programmes, in order to make measurable progress to reduce poverty and adequately reflect the multi-dimensional nature of poverty.

>>EU Structural Funds: a financial instrument for implementing the Europe2020 strategy

A number of countries make clear references to the EU structural funds as important financial instruments to co-finance the implementation of measures in the NRPs, and the European Social Fund (ESF) is often mentioned as a tool to promote employment of vulnerable groups. However, the ESF is mentioned as a tool to tackle homelessness in only few 2012 NRPs. Yet, under the future programming period (2014-2020), the ESF will be crucial to alleviate the impact of the crisis. We call on Member States to support the [Commission's proposal](#) to allocate 20% of the ESF to tackle poverty and social exclusion through a range of actions, including "active inclusion", "enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest" and "integration of marginalised communities".

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is mentioned in some 2012 NRPs, but mainly in relation to supporting work on research and development. Under the future programming period, the Commission proposes that governments put forward the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty as one of the investment priorities of the ERDF. This includes “investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status and transition from institutional to community-based services”. All of which can be relevant to develop the infrastructure needed to implement measures to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion.

On the whole, the links between the Structural Funds and the NRPs are not always explicitly made. But it is clear that the NRPs will be crucial for setting the agenda of the future Operational Programmes 2014-2020. Moreover, the regional operational programmes are an important channel for integrating the Europe2020 targets into regional and local development efforts. As well as the Structural Funds, the future European [Programme](#) for social change and innovation can serve to strengthen research and evidence-based measures to effectively tackle the social impact of the crisis such as rising homelessness.

>>Governance in the Europe2020 strategy

Links between the finance/economic ministries (leaders in the preparation of the NRPs) and the social affairs/housing ministries are on the whole quite strong given the strong presence of measures to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion in the 2012 NRPs, but in many countries there is still room for improvement. The fact that the 2012 NRPs for Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal fail to mention the excellent policy progress on homelessness in these countries is possibly due to lack of coordination between the finance and social ministries. It is fundamental for all ministries which have responsibilities in relation to economic, employment and social policy to work in an open and transparent way.

The National Social Reports under the European Platform against Poverty (key flagship initiative to support national governments to reach the 2020 poverty target) are mentioned in only one 2012 NRP (The Netherlands), yet the National Social Reports should be linked to the Europe2020 process, especially through guideline 10 on promoting social inclusion. In some cases, it seems homelessness is absent from the NRP since governments have chosen to report on homelessness action through the National Social Reports (Netherlands, Denmark). The links between both NRPs and NSRs is not entirely clear.

The governance surrounding the preparation of the 2012 NRPs is promising in relation to integrating relevant measures under guideline 10 on combating poverty and promoting social, however it is not clear to what extent civil society organisations and social service providers were involved in drafting the reports. According to Recital 16 of the [Employment guidelines](#), the NRPs are expected to be designed with the involvement of stakeholders.

Currently, the NRPs are perceived by many organisations as reports rather than strategic documents. We hope the Europe2020 process will allow for exchanges, research and social experimentation initiatives based on different measures outlined in the NRPs, including homelessness measures, in order to ensure they have a genuine impact on policy and society. This is all the more important in order to ensure consistency and continuity of policy implementation between years. An example of lack of consistency is to be found in the case of Spain where the 2011 NRP has a whole strategy for access to housing for vulnerable groups, whereas the 2012 NRP only briefly mentions housing/urban policies in general.



III Recommendations for general follow-up at EU and national level

These key policy trends in the 2012 NRPs show political will to make social investments in entrenched social problems (like homelessness), in order to create sustainable economic growth.

These recommendations are addressed to the European Commission and national governments since both levels of governance are intricately linked in the Europe2020 strategy, and since the European Commission is in a position to make country-specific recommendations to national governments on their National Reform Programmes until 2020.

We invite all parties concerned to:

1. Support the European Parliament's call for the "development of an ambitious, integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of ending homelessness" by using the European Platform against Poverty to build on the measures highlighted in the National Reform Programmes, through tools such as peer reviews, research, social policy experimentation, trans-national exchange projects, and general policy coordination between ministries dealing with homelessness and housing exclusion.
2. Make clear links between Europe2020 and other relevant EU processes such as the discussions on EU financial instruments for 2014-2020 such as the structural funds (ESF for empowering vulnerable groups to get back onto the labour market, and ERDF to develop adequate infrastructure to support this); the future EUPSI programme to drive social innovation and social policy experimentation to find effective ways to solve homelessness; the Horizon2020 research agenda to fill research gaps on homelessness and investigate emerging issues related to the social impact of the crisis; the free movement of persons in the EU and social security coordination, by supporting migrants who take risks by moving to other EU countries in search of new opportunities; and finally the successor of the EU Food Aid programme which can have a direct impact on alleviating homelessness.
3. Involve relevant organisations, including social service providers and civil society organisations, in the drafting and implementing of the National Reform Programmes. Social services working with vulnerable groups have significant expertise of the complex realities linked to poverty. They can be real partners in all levels of the policy process to ensure policy results and targets are achieved by 2020.
4. Further develop national actions on homelessness based on evidence-based strategies; set targets on homelessness to make visible and measurable progress in reducing poverty; promote access to mainstream services (health, housing, employment) for all, especially vulnerable groups; ensure that adequate financial investment is made in social services now in order to avoid spiralling costs of homelessness for society in the future.

Any questions? Contact information@feantsa.org

Annex I ETHOS European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion

	Operational Category	Living Situation	Generic Definition
Conceptual Category	ROOFLESS	1 People Living Rough	1.1 Public space or external space Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
		2 People in emergency accommodation	2.1 Night shelter People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
	HOUSELESS	3 People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 Homeless hostel 3.2 Temporary Accommodation 3.3 Transitional supported accommodation Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
		4 People in Women's Shelter	4.1 Women's shelter accommodation Women accommodated due to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term
		5 People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1 Temporary accommodation / reception centres 5.2 Migrant workers accommodation Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status
	INSECURE	6 People due to be released from institutions	6.1 Penal institutions 6.2 Medical institutions (*) 6.3 Children's institutions / homes No housing available prior to release Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing identified (e.g by 18th birthday)
		7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	7.1 Residential care for older homeless people 7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
		8 People living in insecure accommodation	8.1 Temporarily with family/friends 8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy 8.3 Illegal occupation of land Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling Occupation of land with no legal rights
		9 People living under threat of eviction	9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented) 9.2 Re-possession orders (owned) Where orders for eviction are operative Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess
	INADEQUATE	10 People living under threat of violence	10.1 Police recorded incidents Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
		11 People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	11.1 Mobile homes 11.2 Non-conventional building 11.3 Temporary structure Not intended as place of usual residence Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin
		12 People living in unfit housing	12.1 Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
		13 People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay is defined as more than one year.
This definition is compatible with Census definitions as recommended by the UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006)

(*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.

See ETHOS in 23 languages here: <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=484>

**Annex II : Extracts from the NRPs of country measures
which have direct impact on homelessness**

Austria

Under IV.5 Reduction of poverty and social exclusion, there is a clear measure aimed at “Combating long-term unemployment by an improvement of the participation in the labour market of working-age groups at risk of poverty and exclusion”

IV.5.7 In the field of combating long-term unemployment, the Austrian federal government relies on measures to improve the employment situation of working-age groups threatened by poverty and exclusion (see also employment targets). Several measures are implemented in the framework of the existing operative programme Employment of the European Social Fund (ESF). The diversity of the projects promoted by the ESF can be found on the website <http://www.esf.at/esf/projekte/>. (p.39)

Belgium

-Under 4.5 Social inclusion, four priorities to promote social inclusion are mentioned: 4.5.1 Guaranteeing social protection of the population, 4.5.2 Combating child poverty, 4.5.3 Active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, and 4.5.4 combating inadequate housing and homelessness.

-Under the last priority 4.5.4 combating inadequate housing and homelessness: The federal government will conclude a collaboration agreement on homelessness with the federated entities. This agreement will delimit the missions and responsibilities of each level of competence. The Communities and the Regions are investing in eviction prevention. Flanders has developed a programme for ambulant and preventive housing guidance, in the context of which the eviction problem is mapped more accurately. The accelerated allocation of social rental housing to the homeless will be examined and adapted. The development of easily accessible integrated offices for housing and energy will be started by subsidising the inter-municipal local housing policy projects. The affordability of individual housing will be improved by extending the rent subsidy and the action of the social rental agencies will be reinforced. In 2012, a follow-up report will be made with regard to the social housing offer in the context of the land and property policy. The Brussels Capital Region invests in the prevention of evictions where no new housing is proposed. The existing support for tenants will be reinforced and vulnerable groups will be offered "housing care". Additional services for people in precarious living situations will be developed and there will be experiments with alternative housing in order to stimulate autonomy, solidarity-based housing and guidance in the living environment. In Wallonia, there will be further consultation between the public and the private partners in 2012, in order to organise the structural financing of the night shelters by 2014. Wallonia continues its policy of extending and improving the housing offer: increase of the number of public housing units and renovation of the existing housing units, especially with view to the improvement of the energy efficiency (cf. section energy-climate), the award of housing benefits and energy bonuses for private dwellings. (p.29)

-Under the Wallonia regional NRP (Annex 4) 3.4. Social action and social cohesion: Increasing access to basic rights at the local level: The Social Cohesion Plan of the cities and municipalities of Wallonia (SCP) 2009-2013 aims to support Walloon municipalities that commit to promoting social cohesion in their territory. The SCP promotes the exercise of six fundamental rights under regional jurisdiction (the right to a decent income, the right to health protection and to social and medical assistance, the right to decent housing and a healthy environment, the right to work, the right to receive training, the right to cultural and social development) and activates two levers: The social development of neighbourhoods and the fight against all forms of deprivation, poverty and insecurity in general. (p.62)

Bulgaria

-Under 5.3 Poverty and Social Inclusion, 5.3.1 Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Social Groups : Development of a methodology for determining the scope of “working poor”; conducting a survey on homelessness and creating a statistical database on homelessness and its dimensions, as well as development of an overall strategy for fight against homelessness; (p.66)

-Addressing 2011 Country Specific Recommendation 5: The creation of integrated social, healthcare and educational services for homeless people is a key measure for poverty and social exclusion reduction. The number of temporary placement centres as of 31.12.2011 is 10, with a capacity of 613 places, of which 543 occupied. New possibilities for European financing will be sought in the next programme period. (p.97)

Czech republic

-Under the priority III.2.3. of social inclusion and poverty reduction 4th- Quality social services to needy. A key step is the continuation of reforms aimed at promoting the availability of social services through effective and transparent management environment, creating networks, distribution and monitoring of financial public funding in the social services. (p.54)

-Greater support will be given to non-for-profit organizations ensuring that provide social intervention non- profit housing services. At the same time there is a solution on the concept of **homelessness**, which will focus on complex solution to the situation of extreme risk social exclusion. Of the current legislation that annual obligation drafting Government Regulation for the Purpose housing of state social support for the year in the amount of costs comparable rent amounts to counted for solid fuels, and amounts normative housing costs (p. 56)

Denmark

- One of the relevant passed initiatives is the agreement on implementation of the rate adjustment pool (satspuljen) for 2012 (2011): The agreement means that from 2012 to 2015, a total of approximately DKK 3.6 billion will be earmarked for 90 initiatives to improve the conditions of vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups, etc. The strategic focus areas include holistic employment efforts, initiatives aimed at socially disadvantaged children and young people, prevention and health for the socially most disadvantaged groups and improved integration. In the health area, the rate adjustment pool agreement also means that in the 2012-2015 period, a total amount of more than DKK 1 billion will be earmarked for improving the psychiatric system and enhancing prevention and health for the socially most disadvantaged groups (p. 28)

-See National Social Report 2012

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?policyArea=750&subCategory=758&type=0&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=SPCNationalSocialReport&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>

Estonia

In response to the 2011 Country Specific Recommendation on Improving effectiveness of labour market measures: The Employment programme 2012-2013 tackles long-term unemployment. The programme provides various new labour market services which help to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of the long-term unemployed in finding a job. Example: For the long-term unemployed and unemployed with social problems the coaching for working life is offered over a period of up to six months. (pp.22-23)

Finland

-Finland's Europe2020 national targets – see Target 5.5: Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 150,000. Inequalities between residential areas will be reduced through a number of programmes launched by the Government: 1) a housing policy reform programme completed at the beginning of 2012, 2) a development programme on housing for the elderly, 3) a long-term homelessness reduction programme and related letters of intent for 2012–2015 made with cities, 4) a metropolitan area partnership programme with central government, cities and key actors, 5) a cross-administrative programme promoting the vitality of communities, including local and everyday exercise. (p.44)

-Under 4.5 Full utilisation of labour, there are measures to tackle long-term unemployment. Long-term unemployment will be reduced by means of a local government trial lasting the parliamentary term. The trial will primarily cover those long-term unemployed who have received unemployment benefit for at least 500 days. The target group also includes those job seekers who have been unemployed for at least 12 months and who are at risk of being excluded from the labour market. In the trial, the main responsibility for managing an individual's employment support will be transferred under the sole or joint responsibility of a municipality or municipalities after 12 months of unemployment at the latest. Employment will be promoted by means of new models based on local partnership and multi-professional cooperation. The trial municipalities will be selected in spring 2012 and the trial will be launched in the autumn.(p.33)

France

Under guideline 10 on tackling poverty, the first measure is “Promoting access and tenure in housing for the homeless and people in substandard housing”. In 2011, a larger share of the quota of housing units reserved by the central government in the subsidised rental housing stock and a share of the housing units reserved by the employers’ housing funds were set aside as self-contained units for people coming out of homeless shelters and households with statutory housing entitlement. The development of special needs or temporary housing arrangements through intermediation in the private rental housing stock was continued. The focus has also been on making existing housing structures more efficient. The first nationwide cost survey of the sector and the support plan for the players (central government agencies and NGOs) should contribute to this purpose as the programme to renovate homeless shelters continues (€20m in the 2011 budget of the National Housing Agency). The risk of energy poverty came under close scrutiny. An energy poverty observatory was set up in 2011 (gathering statistics, analysing households’ situations, tracking this phenomenon in public and private-sector housing and in access to mobility). A recent Decree makes the procedure for applying subsidised gas and electricity rates automatic, thereby reducing the spending of the lowest-income households on necessities. (p.34)

Germany

5. Soziale Eingliederung vor allem durch die Verringerung von Armut fördern
Since long-term unemployment is a major determinant of the risk, poverty and social exclusion experience, the federal government has defined its quantitative target based on the number of persons living in households affected by long-term unemployment. The number of long-term unemployed people (unemployed for more than a year) should be reduced by 20 percent by 2020 (p.12)

Greece

-Under the chapter on the national social policy, and in particular, under the subchapter on fighting the social consequences of the crisis, the “establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to address the rapidly deteriorating homelessness problem” is referred to as one of the measure aiming at limiting the social consequence (p. 32).

-Building a “social safety net” against social exclusion, which includes access to basic services, such as medical care, **housing** and education is a priority, especially during the crisis: This specific objective is not quantified, but highlights the need and willingness of the State to increase access to basic services in the framework of the third active inclusion pillar (p.30)

Hungary

-Paragraph 55. Modernization of residential social institutions and introduction of supported housing A form of care will be created for people with disabilities, psychiatric patients, individuals suffering from addictions and homeless people living in residential institutions which connects housing and social care together in such a way that care is provided in flats/buildings rented or owned by the institution where the required services are also available. Consequently, those living in supported housing do not have to live in institutions accommodating large numbers of people, and therefore independence, autonomy, the reinforcement of social and family ties and the development of skills and abilities play a more emphatic role in the course of their care (p. 48)

-Annexes: Housing support ensures a continuous contribution to overheads so can potentially prevent people from going into arrears and financial housing problems from arising. Within the framework of the measure the number of those entitled to this support will increase by modifying the income limit. In addition to transforming the conditions of entitlement, priority is also given to targeted supplies promoting contributions-in-kind. A person whose household income per one unit of consumption does not exceed 250% of the old-age pension and whose other members of the household have no assets will be entitled to housing support (p. 151)

-Paragraph 53. Improving the employability and labour market chances of the most disadvantaged groups, those living in extreme poverty and the Roma. Training and competence development programmes will be launched for wide strata of the long-term unemployed, inactive population living in extreme poverty in order to improve their employability. Some of the programmes are aimed at putting an end to the exclusion of those living in segregated living environments and to ethnic and social segregation through activities designed to improve their employability, labour market integration and access to the social care system and social services. The complex programme includes activities such as ongoing social work, motivation training, the promotion of programmes facilitating independent

living and the improvement of housing conditions. Additionally, we shall create support and consulting services in the disadvantaged regions which effectively serve the reinforcement of their employability and allow these disadvantaged individuals, often also struggling with disabilities, to successfully join conventional training and employment programmes in the future. (p.46)

Ireland

-With the onset of the economic crisis, the Government prioritised the following: To protect the most vulnerable from the worst impact of the crisis; To reform income supports for children and people of working age; To strengthen activation policy to support people back into work. Protect the most vulnerable. The Government continues to seek to minimise the impact of fiscal consolidation under the EU/IMF programme on vulnerable groups. In Budget 2012, the nominal value of welfare rates was maintained. The latest (2010) figures indicate that minimum welfare payments (including fuel allowance) are equivalent to 100% of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (60% line) and that the poverty reduction effect of social transfers remains at 60%, one of the highest in the EU. (p.16)

-The provision of a new Labour Market Education and Training Fund for the long-term unemployed, to be co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). (p.5)

-Strengthen activation policy - Labour activation measures are critical in ensuring inclusive growth and providing developmental opportunities for the most vulnerable in our society. Pathways to Work, as outlined in Target 1 - Employment, provides for more regular and on-going engagement with people who are unemployed, in particular those who are long-term unemployed. The National Employment and Entitlements Service plays a central role in supporting active inclusion for the unemployed, providing an integrated service of income support, employment supports and community welfare service, in a one-stop-shop delivery model (as mentioned previously). (p.17)

Lithuania

One of the programmes to be implemented for reducing social exclusion is Lithuanian Housing Strategy (2004-2020), which is aimed at establishing long-term housing policy goals and priorities serving as a basis for: the improvement of legal acts regulating the housing sphere and its management and a public awareness-raising system; preparation and implementation of the programmes and measures for housing development, renovation and modernisation, financial and social assistance to individuals. By 2020 the strategy envisages:

- increasing the scope for individuals to choose rented dwellings in the private sector;
- drafting and implementing the procedure for compensating the rental charge to low-income individuals (p. 42)

Luxembourg

- Measure 5.5.1 Through consistency among policies of all NRP measures, Luxembourg aims to reduce the number of persons under the threat of poverty or social exclusion by 6,000 people by 2020. (p.50)

- Measure 5.5.2 f. Among key measures to achieve the social inclusion objective: National strategy to counter homelessness and exclusion linked to housing. In 2011, the government launched a collaboration platform made up of representatives of the ministries concerned, the Syndicate of Cities and Towns in Luxembourg (SYVICOL), communes and non-governmental organizations to draw up a national strategy to combat homelessness. The working group stressed the importance of adopting a holistic approach to homeless persons, recognizing the social, psychological and economic aspects and avoiding cutting off populations and their problems. This approach presupposes a coordinated and concerted policy on the inter-ministerial level that simultaneously encourages synergies between specific social structures of homelessness and the ex-hospital domain. The platform recommends creating decentralized regional centers for homeless persons, making decentralized, supervised housing units available for persons who are often alcoholics or multiple substance users with non-rehabilitative psychiatric disorders and who need a stable home with a minimum of professional supervision for their daily life as well as the creation of a specialized institution of a care/rest center type for chronic or terminal homeless people. (p.53)

Malta

Under the national environmental policy: Measure 2.3.35 : Ensure that social housing prioritises rental subsidies, or the purchase of, existing buildings, rather than building on previously unbuilt land (p. 151). The Housing Authority (HA) has launched a scheme whereby owners of vacant property can rent their properties to the authority to be in turn sublet at subsidised rates to vulnerable individuals or families. The main objective of the scheme is that of addressing the priority waiting list of 535 applicants. By partnering with the private sector, the HA will be able to meet the needs of its most vulnerable applicants in the short-term by exploiting the sizeable vacant private property stock. There are many aspects of this scheme that make it truly sustainable. The HA will rely far less on the construction of new residential units on undeveloped land and will thus minimize environmental problems associated with urban sprawl. Moreover, Skema Kiri is an opportunity for the property industry to generate some income which can be reinvested in new employment opportunities or the safeguarding of jobs (p. 131).

Netherlands

The 2012 NRP makes a reference to the National Social Report for all policies in the area of social inclusion, pensions and care. (p.24) and, indeed, this report includes initiatives on homelessness. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?policyArea=750&subCategory=758&type=0&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=SPCNationalSocialReport&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>

Poland

-Section 3.2 Counteract social exclusion. Tasks to be delivered in 2012/2013: Continuing the social and communal housing programme and creating protected flats, night shelters and housing for the homeless (Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy) ; Modification and continuation of the programme of social housing (Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy) Sustainable management of the communal social housing resources (Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy) (p.29)

-3.2.2 Developing social entrepreneurship of the people at risk of social exclusion (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). Tasks to be delivered in 2012/2013 :Delivery of the "Active forms of countering social exclusion for 2011–2015" (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) (p.29)

-3.2.3 Development of social economy sector (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). Tasks to be delivered in 2012/2013 : Establishing support infrastructure for the social economy entities in the systemic, institutional, legal, financial and educational dimension (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) (p.29)

-3.2.7: Development of social services system responding to the new challenges of social exclusion (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) Tasks to be delivered in 2012/2013 :Organising trainings for the employees of welfare and social integration institutions on implementing new standards of welfare and social integration services provided by social assistance organisational units e.g. for the elderly, disabled, crisis intervention, counteracting domestic violence, etc. (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) (p.30)

Romania

By February 24, 2012, the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (MDRT) contracted 30 projects conceived to improve the quality of the social services through the rehabilitation of the social infrastructure, including the social housing for disadvantaged persons. The payments amounted 5,118 million lei, which represents only 4.7% of the total value of the contracts. One single project intended for rehabilitating and modernising the day nursery for elderly persons in Alba Iulia is finalised, having a lodging capacity of 100 persons

As regards the active social inclusion, by February 24, 2012, ESF financed 60 projects facilitating the access of the persons belonging to vulnerable groups to the labour market. The payments amounted 228.86 million lei (about 32.60% from the total value of the contracts), 6,855 persons belonging to vulnerable groups participated in the qualification/retraining and professional conversion programmes, out of which 1,483 Roma, 1,070 disabled, 19 young people leaving the public child care system, and 685 drug and alcohol addicted persons. The share of participants to the training/retraining programmes which obtained the certification was 66%.

The draft Law on social economy is at the final stage of elaboration. On December 14, 2011, the project has been published on the MMFPS website, in order to be submitted to the public consultation. MMFPS postponed again the completion of this action, for the QIV/2012, in order to achieve the

consultation of all stakeholders and to follow the chronological order of legislative procedure required for the adoption of the normative act. The postponement of the action deadline was caused by the large number of the stakeholders involved, which called for the extension of the consultation period. (p.27)

Slovakia

-1) supporting socially excluded communities: The Social Development Fund implements a national project focused on social field work in municipalities, the aim of which is to promote social inclusion by improving access to, quality and effectiveness of social services for persons at risk of social exclusion or excluded persons, with the focus on increasing their chances of employment; In January 2012, the Government adopted the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Integration of Roma until 2020. The strategy reflects the need to move away from the passive provision of social services by general and local government authorities to the Roma community to activation assistance. The strategy seeks to minimize the impacts of individual types of social exclusion in relation to Roma communities and to develop an inclusion policy. It covers such areas as education, employment, healthcare services, housing, access to financial services, non-discrimination and perception by majority population (p. 14)

-2) Ensuring accessibility and quality of social services: In November 2011, the Slovak Government approved a draft strategy to deinstitutionalize the system of social services and substitute care. The strategy is designed to replace institutional isolation and segregation of people in specialized establishments with an alternative model of a network of cooperating and inter-linked social services provided on an integrated basis within local communities. This approach reflects the need to provide social services which guarantee independence, active life and social participation to individuals (p. 15)

Slovenia

Under "Inclusion growth" measures: The promotion of the employment of the recipients of long-term cash social assistance with various complex problems (e.g. people with mental disorders, former addicts with health problems, former prisoners, homeless persons and similar groups of people) will also be implemented by developing social entrepreneurship. Within this framework, particular support will be provided to the development of social enterprises employing members of vulnerable groups. (p.19)

Spain

-STATE PLAN FOR URBAN REGENERATION AND RENT; Objective: To ensure all citizens access to housing, the disposal of empty homes and promote employment in one of the sectors most affected by the current economic climate. Measurement will take place a State Plan for urban regeneration and the rent (2013-2016) inserted in the Plan for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing (PITVI) 2012-2024. The fundamental principles of this Plan for housing are the following: Define a plan of social housing for rental and purchase option. Encourage hire as the main instrument for access to housing for people with fewer resources, bringing our housing policy, so, to what is done in the most advanced European countries. Encourage the rehabilitation, as the activity more efficient from the point of socio-economically sustainable and environmentally (p. 240)

2011 NRP (pp.35-39) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_spain_en.pdf

IV.5. Objectives:

In addition, certain populations such as people with disabilities and those suffering from material deprivation, will benefit through concrete and specific policies, especially in the field of housing, education, training and employment.

IV: 5. Obstacles:

5. Poor access to housing vulnerable people due to limited and underdeveloped housing market rent.

IV.5 MEASURES:

c. Reduce the risk of poverty of certain population groups

For single person households and / or in which one receives pension and are not homeowners, should promote the access and maintenance of rental housing.

d. Ensure access to housing or decent housing

Through an inclusive housing policy, based on a model of sustainable urbanism and accessible to facilitate access to decent housing for families, especially lower income and groups with increased risk of exclusion:



-The "State Housing Plan and Rehabilitation 2009-2012" is the main tool to facilitate access to housing, both ownership and rental, people with low incomes, by subsidizing mortgage loans and grants to pay rent. The Plan also includes a number of groups with preference in access to aid, because they are particularly vulnerable in access to housing, as dependents or disabled, age 65 years or women victims of gender violence. In addition, the Plan includes specific actions to support these groups, such as sheltered accommodation. It also includes actions to eradicate substandard housing.

-To promote the regeneration of degraded or vulnerable neighborhoods and improve living conditions, safety, accessibility and energy efficiency of housing, the Housing Plan aid increases to these actions in order to complete about 100,000 performances a year. Moreover, in 2010 was reduced VAT on most of the rehabilitation work and introduced a deduction in income tax, which has doubled in 2011. Finally, we have carried out a regulatory reform of the Rehabilitation Act of Sustainable Economy.

-Promotion of rental policy through the Basic Income Emancipation aimed at young people between 2008 and 2010, 260,000 young people benefited and will continue during 2011 over 100,000 young people ranging. It also highlights the development of improvements in the taxation of rent included in the LES and the continued maintenance of the objectives of promoting the rental of the current State Plan for Housing and Rehabilitation referred to in the first point.

-Maintenance of the social bond to limit the increase in electricity bills applicable to the most vulnerable households (the currently benefiting about three million households)

Sweden

Board of Health and Welfare's latest survey on homelessness, its extent and character, shows that very few of the homeless people have wage labour, and social assistance is a regular source of income. Almost half of the roughly 34,000 people who have been reported to be homeless or excluded from the regular housing market in 2011 live in relatively long-term living situations, such as trial apartments and apartments rented by Social Services. Of the reported homeless people, there were about 3,400 in urgent homeless situations. Of these, 280 sleep outside in public spaces. The municipalities are responsible for housing and support to people with a variety of social problems. The Government has appointed a homelessness coordinator to support the municipalities' work, especially to prevent eviction. Improved eviction statistics and support to municipalities' housing planning are other initiatives to prevent homelessness (p. 30)

-For people in a vulnerable situation, there are often complex problems that require coordinated rehabilitation measures from the social services, the health and medical care system, the Swedish Social Insurance Administration and the Public Employment Service. In a little more than two-thirds of Sweden's municipalities these agencies have implemented such initiatives through coordinating organisations. (p.27)

United Kingdom

-Under section: Reforming the housing sector. Paragraph 3.32: Over 300,000 homes in the UK have been empty for longer than six months. Bringing empty homes back into use can increase the housing supply to meet local needs; help tackle homelessness; prevent neighbourhood decline; and regenerate areas. The Government has committed £100,000 million through the Affordable Homes Programme. Almost £70 million of this funding has already been allocated, and will bring over 5,600 properties back into use across the country. In the Housing Strategy, the Government committed a further £50 million to tackle concentrations of poor quality, empty homes in low demand areas, with each bid for funding required to bring at least 100 homes back to use. (p.19)

Paragraph 3.42 Scotland: Homes fit for the 21st Century, the Scottish Government's strategy and action plan for housing for the decade to 2020, was published in February 2011. Key elements of the Scottish Government's overall approach include:

- support for social housing, including a commitment to deliver 30,000 affordable homes by 2016, with at least 20,000 of these being for social rent, including 5,000 council houses;
- development of a range of innovative approaches to lever in the maximum possible investment from sources other than the Scottish Government;
- a three year mortgage indemnity scheme for new build housing, which will increase availability of lending;
- making better use of the existing housing system, for example, increasing the use of empty or under



occupied homes. The Scottish Government is committed to achieving the statutory target that, from December 2012, all unintentionally homeless people will be entitled to settled accommodation. (p.21)

-Social Justice Strategy. Paragraph 4.67 The Government's strategy for social justice was published on 13 March 2012. The strategy sets out the Government's commitment to giving individuals and families facing multiple disadvantages the support and tools they need to turn their lives around. Rather than focusing on increases in income alone to bring people above the poverty line, this strategy takes a much wider approach, exploring how to tackle the root causes of poverty to promote real and sustained changes in peoples' lives. The strategy embeds the principle of early intervention into the heart of Government policy making to help prevent problems arising in the first place. It also sets out a vision for a second chance society so that when problems do arise, support is available and focused on recovery and independence, not on maintaining people in the situation in which they are. (p.56)



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- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

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