

## European Exchange on Health & Homelessness

### Brussels, 24-25 June 2019

#### **PEOPLE IN ALL POLITICS - Moving away from silos, towards a more people-driven approach.**

The European Exchange on Health & Homelessness was organised in the framework of the European Street Support Project, which is financed by ERASMUS+.

The exchange meeting brought together 60 European experts, including service providers in the area of housing, health and harm reduction, peers and experts by lived experience, researchers and local policy makers.

Main aim of the meeting was to promote effective strategies for integrated care and service provision, by particularly focusing on the challenges faced by marginalised people with complex needs, including homelessness, alcohol and drug addiction, social isolation and stigma, mental health problems, criminalisation, debts, loneliness and more. The programme and the discussions during the meeting were based on the objectives, activities and results of the Street Support Project.

The need for an integrated and inclusive approach becomes increasingly important, especially for local governments, which are directly facing the negative consequences of social disintegration. The public space is an important element in that discussion. It is in public spaces where all social groups - the 'have' and the 'have nots' – meet. The privileged social class feels discomfort and sometimes even fear. The marginalised groups feel more and more socially excluded and banned from the street, the parks and the city centres – which is the one and only place, which is meant to be for everyone. As such, the public space can be both, a battlefield or a playground of society. It reflects and enlarges the problems and challenges of society in a direct and clear way.

Local governments are in the middle of this dilemma. Interventions in the area of urban security and urban conflict prevention are implemented but how to respond to the increasing need for more sustainable solutions? How to provide support structures for marginalised groups with complex needs and how to ensure participation and social inclusion of these groups?

The Street Support Project and the European Exchange on Health on Homelessness addressed these challenges by sharing experiences and good practice examples from different European countries. The results of the Street Support Project were shared and discussed with the participants during interactive plenary and workshop sessions. Relevant project outputs were presented including the Assessment Report, the Country Reports, the Good practice Collection, the Toolbox and last but not least the practical experiences of the project partners during the implementation of their local Action Plans.

The European Multiplier Event has been the first event of this kind. We managed to bring together service providers and policy makers, working for different marginalised groups - such as People experiencing homelessness, People Who Use Drugs and People with mental health problems. A significant number of peers and experts with lived experience participated in the event. Their input was extremely useful and pointed out which intended and unintended consequences certain policies and interventions had on their life. Their participation clearly illustrated that their participation is essential. They are not part of the problem, they are part of the solution!

The presentations and workshop sessions were followed by lively discussions and informal interaction afterwards. Participants felt inspired and expressed their interest to be involved in future opportunities for exchange and cooperation.