

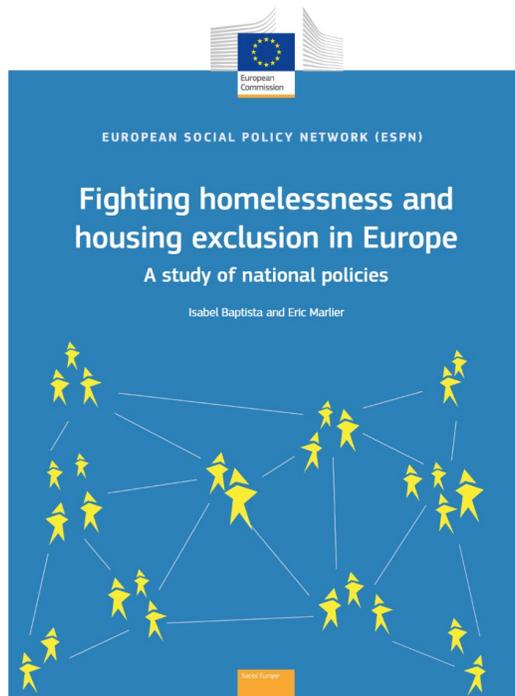
RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS: A EUROPEAN OVERVIEW

15TH EUROPEAN RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON
HOMELESSNESS
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PURPOSE OF THE PRESENTATION



Revisiting earlier research (2019) on policies to address homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe to set the scene for the implementation challenges facing some of the political commitments recently undertaken at the EU level





Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness

“The fight against homelessness can only be won if we work together: local authorities, regional and national governments and European institutions. The involvement of civil society organisations, the social economy and people with experience of homelessness is also of utmost importance. We need to work towards integrated approaches that combine prevention, access to housing and the provision of enabling support services. We want to combat homelessness because housing is a right for every woman, man and child.”

Yves Leterme, Lisbon, 21 June 2021



THE GOAL

The European Platform on Combatting Homelessness will work towards the ending of homelessness by 2030. It will promote policies based on a person-centred, housing-led and integrated approach.

THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT



EU Institutions

- support monitoring of homelessness with a view to provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress made
- support mutual learning of good practices for combatting homelessness and explore further the implementation of successful existing models;
- promote the use of EU funding to support inclusive policy measures aiming at combatting homelessness.

THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT

National, regional and local authorities

- promote the prevention of homelessness, access to permanent housing and the provision of enabling support services to the homeless;
- welcome the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of these policy measures.

DELIVERING ON THE COMMITMENT:
THE BASELINE- WHERE ARE WE
STARTING FROM?

A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

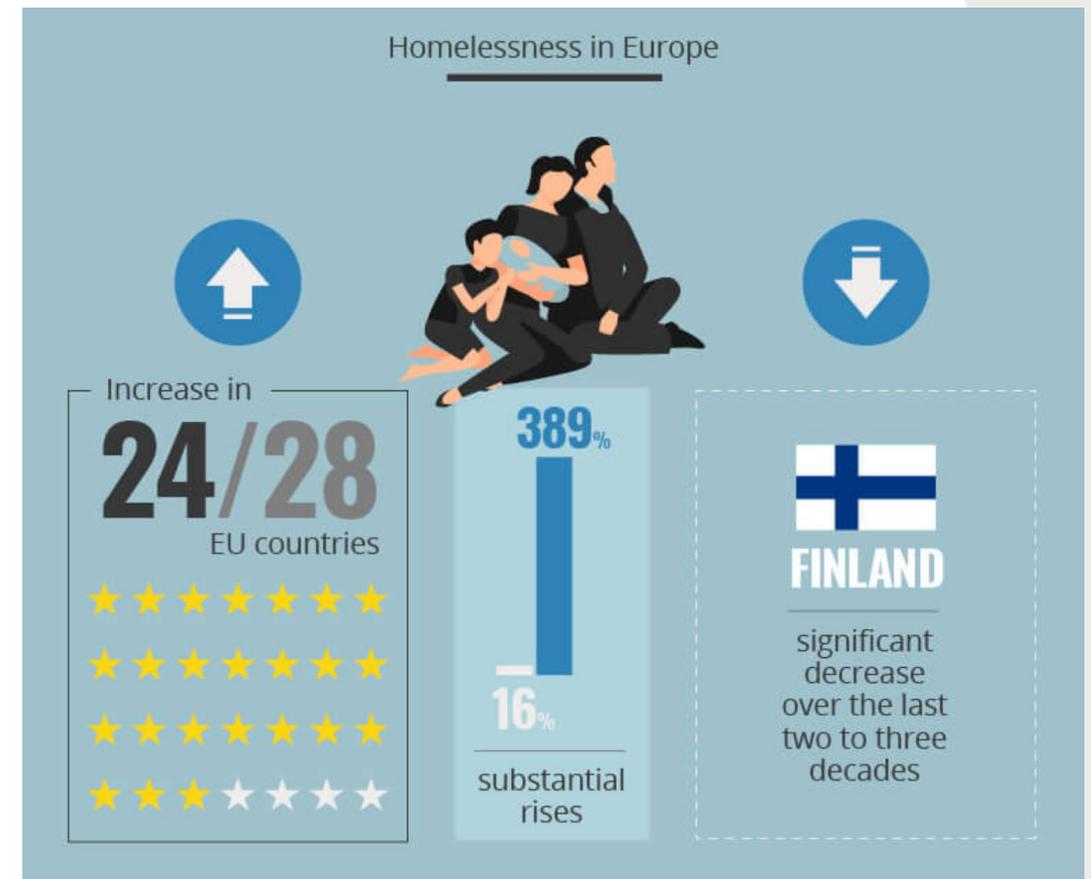


Understanding and monitoring homelessness across Europe

- Official and/or “recognised” definitions of homelessness are common across the EU
- People sleeping rough and staying in emergency/temporary accommodation services are the two most common homelessness categories used in existing definitions
- The availability and nature of data on the extent of homelessness in Europe vary widely (national, regional and city-level statistics vs. estimates of the level of homelessness)
- The adoption of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) proved particularly useful for addressing comparability challenges at the EU level but it is still impossible to accurately determine the real extent of homelessness

Towards the ending of homelessness by 2030...

- 24 of the (then) 28 member states of the EU reported an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness over the past decade, with three reporting a mixed pattern or stabilisation and only Finland experiencing a significant decrease;
- Uncertainty regarding the impact of the pandemic on homelessness and housing exclusion and the “switching off” of temporary protection measures
- Opportunity to rethink both homelessness and the wider dimensions of housing exclusion



Combatting homelessness and ensuring access to housing as a human right

- Negative multi-fold developments in the housing market have been identified as the main key drivers for rises in homelessness over the last decade in the majority of EU countries



- The negative impact of these housing market developments on homelessness and housing exclusion is compounded by the action of other structural key drivers (rising poverty and inequality, increased exposure to unemployment and precarious employment conditions)

Towards more integrated (effective) strategic approaches

- Integrated strategic responses to homelessness and housing exclusion are on the increase across the EU
- Housing-led and/or Housing First services, homelessness prevention and multi-level and multi-sectoral governance structures identified as important common elements within such strategic policy frameworks
- Yet, less evidence on progress achieved in the setting-up of regular and effective monitoring/assessment of strategies' actual implementation

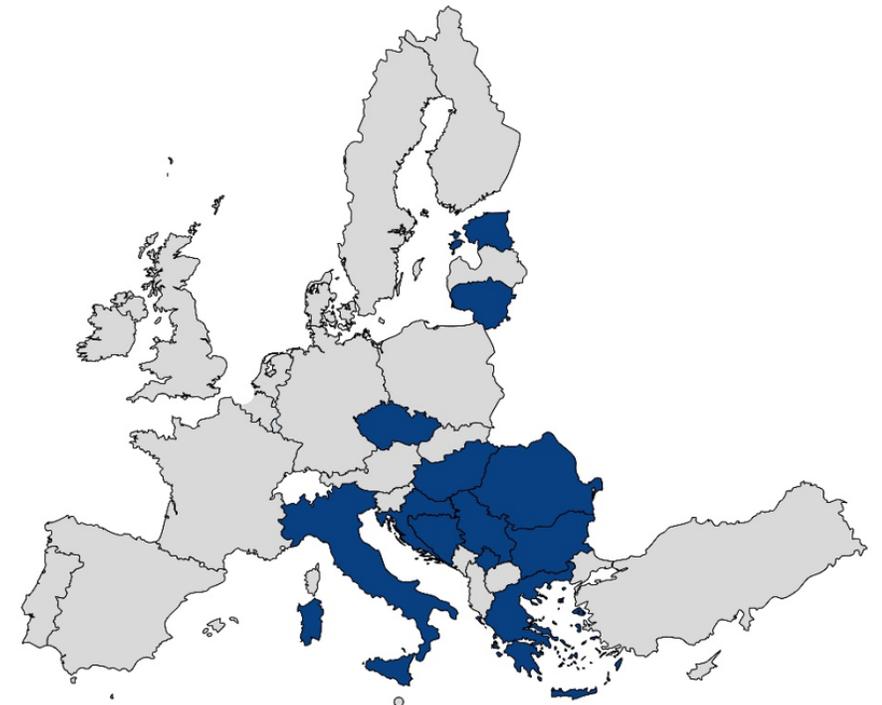
Enhancing prevention, access to housing and the provision of enabling support services

- Evidence of a staircase model of service provision prevails across Europe, notably in many EU member states with shifting trend towards housing-led (including Housing First) services, either emerging or already consolidating
- Emergency and temporary accommodation and non-residential support services (mostly covering emergency and basic needs) are the most common type of services present across Europe
- Different forms of preventative services are in place across Europe, but there is limited provision of integrated and comprehensive prevention systems
- There is a paucity of evidence allowing a reliable assessment on the effectiveness of non-housing-focused services which represent the bulk of homelessness service provision across Europe

Promoting the role of EU funding: lessons learnt

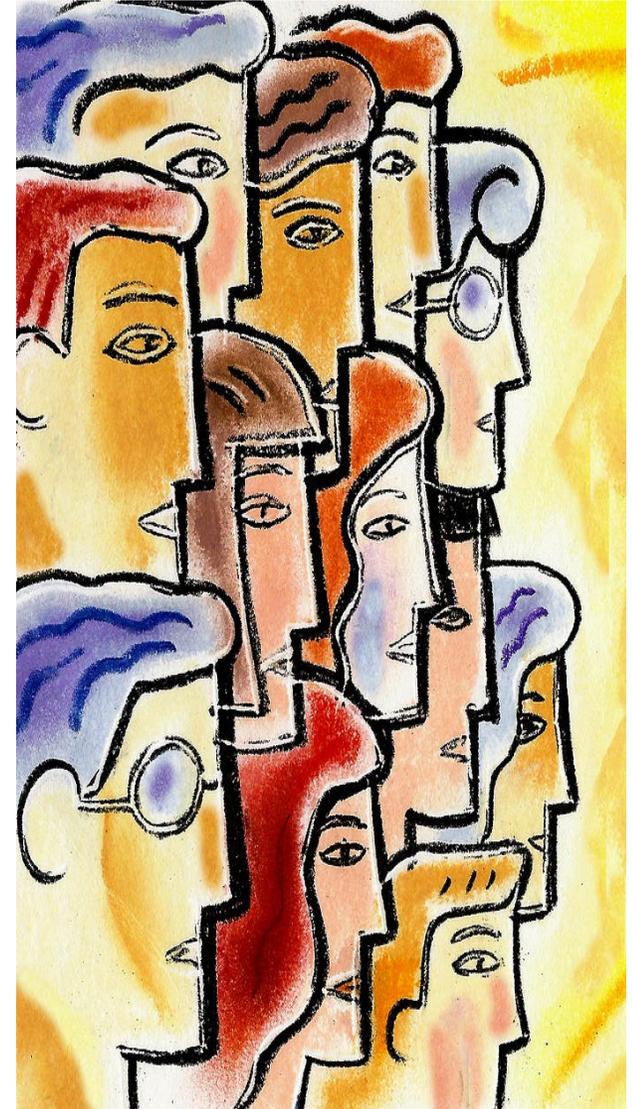
- The role of EU funding has been important only in a very limited number of EU Member States
- Evidence of significant impact of EU funding in promoting innovative responses to homelessness and in steering more strategic policy approaches
- Evidence of overall insufficient and inadequate funding devoted to preventing and fighting homelessness across most countries
- Major shortcomings preventing a more effective supportive role of EU funding related either to the unsuitable focus of such support or to the relatively limited level of funding

■ EU funding deemed important
■ EU funding not mentioned as important



Actively engaging all relevant stakeholders

- Overall, responsibility for the provision of homelessness services lies almost exclusively with local level institutions/organisations, with a very significant role played by NGOs, civil society organisations, charities and local authorities
- Engagement of non-public actors in planning, monitoring and evaluation of service provision is less likely to occur across countries
- Public authorities – at different levels – concentrate a wide range of responsibilities within a very diversified range of cooperation models
- Positive (but few) examples of cooperation models based on the structured, continued engagement of all relevant stakeholders and across different sectors



Responding to homelessness in the wake of the pandemic

- An overall rapid reaction by EU countries by the introduction of (mostly) temporary measures helped avert a massive housing and social crisis
- Yet, this emergency response also highlighted pre-existing weaknesses and gaps
- Assessing, sustaining, accelerating and/or further deepening any progress achieved in addressing homelessness

ESPN REPORT ON THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic swept across Europe, resulting in unprecedented disruption to social, employment and economic life.

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) crisis-response measures put in place by 39 key social protection (SP) / social inclusion (SI) experts

European Homelessness and COVID 19

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The way we address homelessness in Europe must change in the wake of the pandemic

some proposals for quick wins & longer-term changes

- HOMELESS PEOPLE MUST HAVE AN UNCONDITIONAL RIGHT TO EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION
- PROMOTE HOUSING-LED POLICIES
- NO MORE NIGHT-ONLY SHELTER
- HOUSING ALLOWANCES FROM AGE OF 18
- NO MORE DORMITORIES
- PROMOTE HARM-REDUCTION APPROACHES
- NO EVICTIONS LEADING TO HOMELESSNESS AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC
- USE HEALTH BUDGETS TO FINANCE FIGHT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS
- STOP THE CRIMINALISATION OF HOMELESSNESS

FEANTSA

There is #RoomInTheRecovery to end homelessness

THANK YOU