

The Use of EU funds to Support the Homeless

Findings from an international mapping exercise on the use of ESIF

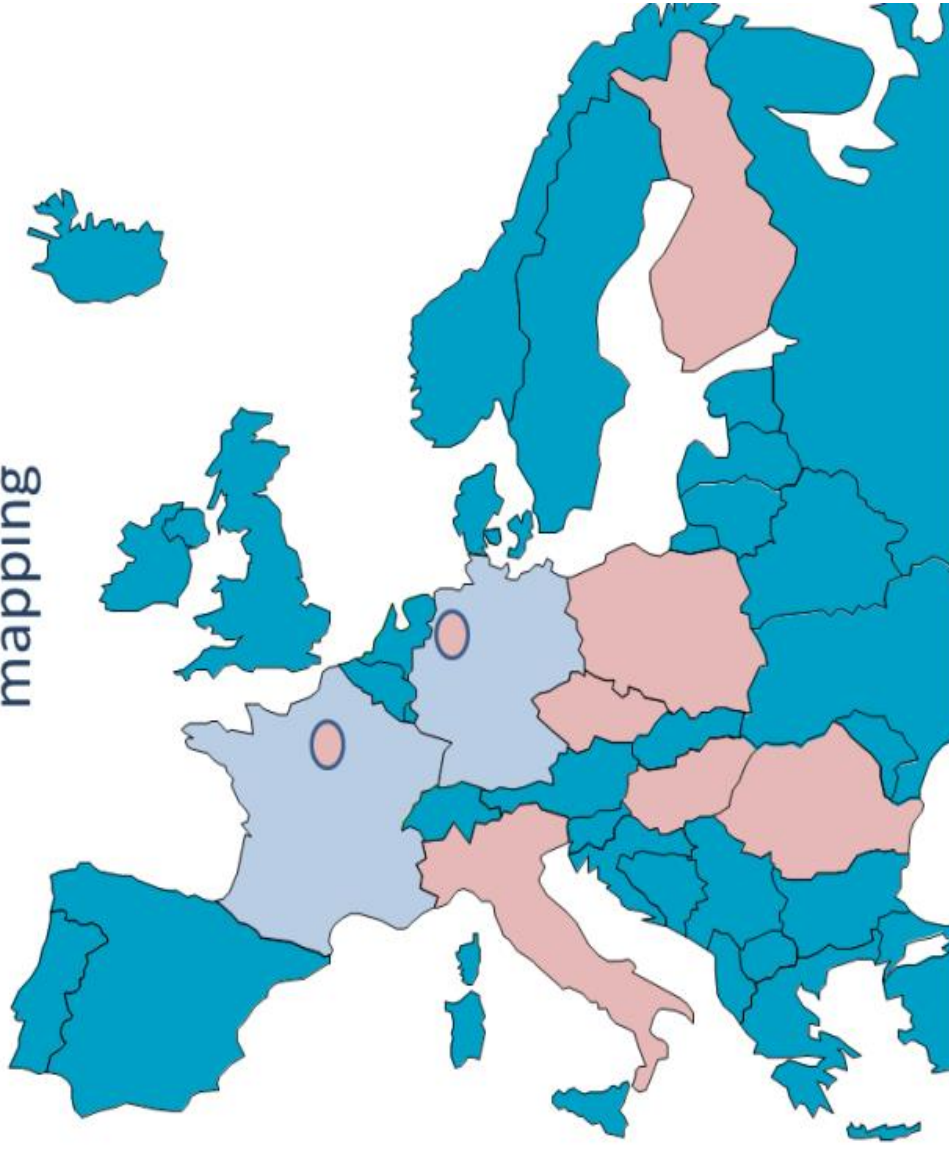
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May 8, 2018, Warsaw

Countries/regions participating in the

mapping



Goals of the mapping

- whether & how **ERDF, ESF, and FEAD** are used in the **field in homelessness** or related social inclusion projects
- **managing *versus* ending homelessness**
- **3 dimensions to formulate recommendations:**
 - (1) national level programming;
 - (2) national/regional strategies and EU funds;
 - (3) project level implementation.

National level programming

- **ESF is the main tool** to address social exclusion
- **Multi-fund OPs** (rather than single ERDF funded tools) fund social infrastructure developments, social housing programs and deinstitutionalisation measures.
- **FEAD** is used **for in-kind or service support** to the most excluded ones, among them specifically **homeless people**.
- **Homeless people's needs are not prioritised**
- *Examples:*
 - **Piloting ways of ending homelessness** with the help of EU funds by funding housing investments or housing led approaches (Italy, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary),
 - **Supporting food and other in-kind subsidies** in the current provision system, mainly from FEAD.
 - **Provision of services for homeless people to access mainstream provision** (Germany, Poland, Italy, France),
 - **Funding service provider development** for more sustainable solutions (Finland).

Links of national/regional strategies and EU funds

- **None or a non-explicit strategic framework** for tackling homelessness
- **Mismatch** between the strategic documents' **goals and**
 - **the actual operation** of the providers;
 - **the prevailing focus of policy and services;**
 - and the development goals of **other relevant policies.**
- The **planned and actual use of EU funds** in the sector and for homeless people is **only sometimes based on actual consultation or consent** with the sector's players and strategic documents' priorities
- In some countries the **OPs' goals are sometimes more progressive than the actual predominant policy** and service approach in place, which creates **room for innovation and institutional and policy shifts.**

Actual implementation of funds

- **Planning: public consultations and open platforms** with varying outcomes
- **Expenditures: (1) calls for proposals** (HU, RO – under planning, PL, FR, CZ) and **(2) non-competitive tenders** (IT). FEAD – many times through central public procurement procedure and then distribution by national, regional and local partner organisations
- **Funding coming from ESIF is extremely marginal in comparison with national and local level funding streams**, especially if there are targeted housing policy measures from the national budget.
- **Projects in place:**
 - targeting needs of homeless people,
 - development of mainstream service delivery,
 - bridging gaps in service provision, or
 - **funding innovative solutions for ending homelessness like housing led or Housing First projects.**

Lever effect of EU funds in ending homelessness

- **ESIF projects bring good opportunities in supporting homeless people**, especially in the housing area, still, the usage of the funds is quite low.
- Reasons:
 - **difficult administration** of EU funds in general and
 - **little or weak incentives** within the programs for municipalities and NGOs to tackle core issues of homelessness.
- **Individual projects** are a good way to **break the status quo of service provision** within the traditional institutional settings and they can **kick off scaling up successful local initiatives**.
- **Missing: prevention of homelessness and sustainable transits** out of homelessness as quickly as possible – **mainstreaming** is needed so that **local projects work as a trampoline** for the homeless, not a trap.

Fourteen recommendations for a better use of EU funds in ending homelessness

EU LEVEL

- **Ensure a stronger rights based approach in legislative proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).**
- **The new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) should have a thematic focus on social inclusion and the fight against poverty.**
- **The European Commission could consider establishing a dedicated instrument or ringfencing of funds to address extreme poverty and destitution.**
- **Simplify difficult administration of EU funds.**
- **Maintain the possibility, and develop further support for member states to use a multi-fund approach e.g. by combining ESF and ERDF for housing with social support**
- **Develop guidance and support measures to encourage the use of EU funding as a lever to end homelessness.**
- **Develop incentives for member states to follow EU social inclusion policies.**

National level

- Strengthen **targeting and monitoring** mechanisms and **facilitate take-up of funds**.
- Bridge the disconnect between **ESF** funded projects for ending homelessness and **ERDF** projects for social housing – needs strong institutional structures for transparent **coordination mechanisms**.
- Focus more on **strengthening prevention and service development, initiating long-term projects and funding cross-sectoral cooperation**.
- **Limit the administrative complexity** of already complex EU funds management to facilitate their mobilisation by NGOs.
- **Scale up individual best practices**.

Project level

- Ensure long-term, integrated and tailor made interventions **to address complex needs of homeless people** so as to go beyond the status quo.
- Seek to **balance out the gaps** caused by **insufficient social benefit and housing subsidy systems** which systematically put rehoused homeless people into vulnerable situations to ensure long-term impact and sustainability of the investments.

Main lessons

- In some countries the **OPs' goals are sometimes more progressive than the actual predominant policy** and service approach in place, which creates **room for innovation and institutional and policy shifts**.
- **Missing: prevention of homelessness and sustainable transits** out of homelessness as quickly as possible – **mainstreaming** is needed so that **local projects work as a trampoline** for the homeless, not a trap.
- Work for **reducing rehoused homeless people's risks** to ensure **long-term impact and sustainability** of the investments.

- Thank you for your attention.

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