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Homeless in Greece in the current financial crisis. What perspectives?



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Review Article from Yorgos Stamatis about the homeless in Greece and the current financial crisis. What are the perspectives and how they can be accomplished.

Περίληψη

Στο άρθρο ανασκόπησης έγινε μία προσπάθεια καταγραφής των σημαντικότερων παραγόντων σχετικά με το κοινωνικό πρόβλημα των αστέγων στην Ελλάδα του 2012, εν μέσω της οικονομικής κρίσης και της βαθιάς ύφεσης από την οποία πλήττεται η χώρα μας. Το πρόβλημα της έλλειψης στέγης που αντιμετωπίζει μία συνεχής αυξανόμενη μερίδα συνανθρώπων μας, είναι ένα θέμα πολυδιάστατο, με ψυχοκοινωνικές, οικονομικές, πολιτικές συνιστώσες τόσο σε εθνικό όσο και σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο. Η κατανόηση του προβλήματος και η πρόταση σημαντικών λύσεων προϋποθέτει την γνώση τόσο της έννοιας της έλλειψης στέγης όσο και της κατανόησης των έως τώρα ενεργειών από θεσμικά όργανα, μη κυβερνητικές οργανώσεις, κυβερνήσεις και λοιπούς εμπλεκόμενους οργανισμούς. Η προσπάθεια καταγραφής τους παρουσιάζει σημαντικά εμπόδια και ελλείψεις, τα οποία σε βάθος χρόνου και με την εφαρμογή συγκεκριμένων πρακτικών δύναται να ξεπεραστούν.

Summary

In this review article, there was made an attempt to capture the major factors on the social problem of homelessness in Greece of 2012, amid the economic crisis and deep recession from which our country suffers. The problem of homelessness that a growing portion of people is facing, is a multidimensional issue with psychosocial, economic, political elements in both national and European level. Understanding the problem and presenting the perspectives for the homeless requires the considerable knowledge of both the concept of homelessness and understanding of events far from institutions, NGOs, governments and other organizations involved. The effort to write them down presents significant obstacles and shortcomings, which over time can be bypassed if specific practices are applied.

Key words: Homeless - Roofless, financial crisis, Houseless, poverty, social protection, third sector, NGOs, Foundations, volunteering

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Άστεγος, οικονομική κρίση, στερούμενοι κατοικίας, φτώχεια, κοινωνική προστασία, τρίτος τομέας, ΜΚΟ, ιδρύματα, εθελοντισμός

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of other living accommodation (homeless-homelessness) and exclusion from home (houselessness) is the most extreme form of social exclusion. Evidence from European and international organizations is daunting and constantly talk about growth trends in the number of homeless people worldwide.

Thus, potentially increasing number of users of services for the homeless requires the redesign and evaluation of existing services that they are functional, modern, competitive and above can serve satisfactorily large number of users with special needs and requirements.

The recent economic crisis and new forms of homelessness in their appearance, increasing political interest in the new generation of homeless and strategies for effective eradication of the phenomenon. According to estimates calculated that more than 20,000 are now homeless in Greece. Although the dwelling is a fundamental factor in prosperity and security is not given the necessary attention to implementing policies for recording and relief of homeless people, but also a phenomenon of prevention strategies with serious consequences for the cohesion and environmental sustainability of our society.

In this article we will approach the profile of this highly-complex social group, and will attempt to examine the policies and perspectives that exist in Greece to improve the living conditions of this social group.

2. The Definition of Homelessness

Existing research has shown that the terms ‘homelessness’ and ‘social housing’ are not necessarily used to mean the same thing in all EU member states.¹ As the terms were therefore likely to have different definitions across the 13 countries, the research team had to ensure that a consistent frame of reference was used in order to undertake a meaningful comparison of responses. In practice, this meant establishing definitions that could be used as a basis to compare the different countries. The use of standard definitions of homelessness and social housing also provided a reference point against which the national and local definitions could be compared. This in turn enabled a more systematic comparison of how the countries compared with one another in terms of the roles of social housing providers in responding to homelessness.

The European Federation of National Organisations was working with homeless people (FEANTSA) created in 2005, the European typology of homelessness and exclusion from the house, the Greek name ETHOS (see Appendix).

Typology of **Homelessness** and **Housing Exclusion** (ETHOS), which was launched by FEANTSA in 2005 as a common framework definition of homelessness. ETHOS uses physical, social and legal domains of a “home” to create a broad typology that classifies homeless people according to four main living situations of rooflessness; houselessness; living in insecure housing; and living in inadequate housing.²

According to the European typology ETHOS, in principle means that "has a suitable house (or room) in which the man and his family have exclusive ownership (physical dimension)."

It means also that he is "able to have privacy and enjoy social relations (social dimension)" and finally that "someone has legal title to ownership of an area (legal dimension)." Based on this analysis, the ETHOS typology distinguishes four basic conceptual categories, which indicate homelessness:

1. **Homeless on the street:** people without access to any accommodation for 24 hours, or access to one night to hostels. Homeless on the street are the most visible side of homelessness.
2. **Houseless:** people who are temporarily living to hostels for the homeless, for victims of abuse, for immigrants, for persons released from prison or are discharged from institutions and lack of any other residence. The deprivation refers to situations where, despite access to temporary accommodation or long term stays in institutions, people do not have the appropriate support to facilitate their social integration.
3. **Insecure:** They are housed temporarily to relatives or friends (of necessity) illegally occupying a site / building for housing, threatened with eviction from rented or owned dwelling, living under the threat of violence or danger.
4. **Inadequate:** Those, residing in areas suitable for housing, according to the laws and rules, living in overcrowded conditions, exceeding the minimum allowable room or housing area per person.
(See Appendix)

3. Causes that lead to Homelessness

The most common explanations for homelessness can be divided into two broad categories: structural and individualistic³. Structural explanations locate the reasons for homelessness in social and economic structures and typically cite poverty, negative labor market forces, inadequate social service coverage, cuts and restrictions in social welfare payments and a lack of accessible affordable housing as the leading causes. Individualistic accounts focus on the personal characteristics and behaviors of homeless people and suggest that homelessness is the consequence of personal problems such as mental illness and addiction.

Researchers have rarely advocated a position that excludes either structural or individual factors; rather their work has generally been a matter of emphasizing one or the other. While explanations for homelessness have oscillated between these positions, with different emphases in different countries at different times, a 'new orthodoxy', based on increasingly robust research evidence, has emerged that understands homelessness as the outcome of a dynamic interaction between **individual characteristics** and actions and **structural change**⁴.

3.1 Individualistic explanations

As the number of homeless people grew during the 1980s, individualistic explanations that stressed the pathology of individual homeless people became increasingly difficult to sustain. New explanations came to the fore. They emphasized the impact of changes in the labour and housing markets, in addition to welfare state retrenchment, as drivers of the apparent increase in homelessness, i.e. they offered 'structural' explanations. These broad changes in how homelessness is viewed often occurred at international level and were a result of debates between quite small groups of academics.

The ways in which homelessness was and is viewed in individual member states still varies significantly.⁵ Conceptualizations of homelessness across member states are in part shaped by the academic discipline in which research is located, the ideological viewpoint of NGOs and the branch of government that has responsibility for funding or delivering services to homeless people.

3.2 Structural explanations

A report prepared for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment of the European Parliament on the theme of shelter for the homeless emphasized the structural causes of homelessness:

Homelessness above all results from loss of housing and the homeless [sic] are mainly households which in their majority lie under or slightly above the basic social benefits level, the institutionally defined poverty line ... The origins and even more the maintenance of homelessness are a consequence of poverty on the one hand and inadequate, or the lack of, attempts to overcome it on the other.⁵

A number of years later, the Council of Europe, in an overview of homelessness, endorsed this broad interpretation, arguing that ‘homelessness represents an extreme form of poverty and marginalization.’⁶

In a detailed overview of research on homelessness in the EU, based on the reports compiled by the European Observatory on Homelessness in the first half of the 1990s, Avramov gave a succinct interpretation of homelessness, which was largely to dominate thinking on homelessness at a EU level over the next decade and a half.

She argued that routes into homelessness were ‘associated with income insufficiency and lack of access to affordable housing, and, the condition is generally precipitated by one or more traumatic events in the individual’s life’⁷.

Avramov’s interpretation was not shared by all, as noted by Fitzpatrick’s 1998 review of the national-level reports on homelessness produced by different members of the European Observatory on Homelessness. Fitzpatrick showed that views about the relative importance of structural and individualistic explanations for homelessness varied between different members of the Observatory.

Yet while arguments about whether homelessness causation was mainly structural or individualistic continued, structural explanations were increasingly being seen as more significant than individualistic ones. Avramov’s interpretation of the causation of homelessness was becoming increasingly influential.

4. The problem of measurement

The accurate measurement of the number of homeless in a city or a country considered one of the most difficult tasks in social research. Major obstacles to enumerate the homeless population are often the temporary nature of homelessness, the lack of awareness of the phenomenon, and the refusal of many homeless people to record, because of "illegal" condition. Although the phenomenon of homelessness presents an international growth and has reached some countries at an alarming rate, the exact extent of homelessness is not known in any country.⁸

An approach⁹, which is considered to produce reliable comparative data between countries, household surveys is asking personal questions, and usually ask participants if they are left homeless in the past. Such studies offer the necessary evidence for the relative percentages of homelessness in different countries, but they also have significant drawbacks, such as the fact that don't count those who are newly homeless, people living in institutions and they are at high risk of losing their home, also the poor don't have a phone¹⁰.

According to FEANTSA¹¹, the measurement problems of homelessness and the generation of valid data across countries, can be solved if Member States: First, use the operational definitions of the European typology ETHOS, to collect their data, Second, try to record and classify formal and informal institutions that provide services in various categories of homeless, recognize the possibilities of concrete entities, concerning the collecting data on homelessness at local, regional and national level and third delegate to a third-party, the responsibility for managing and monitoring a central database, which the operators can provide the necessary statistics and use them to exchange information between them.

5. The European Policies

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)¹² allows the European Union (EU) to develop policies in areas where it has no competence to legislate. In 2000 the EU decided to use the OMC to advance policies in the area of social inclusion. Since 2000 the EU has developed a range of instruments to make the Inclusion OMC work effectively.

The national action plans (NAPs) – renamed national strategy reports in 2006 – are the central and most visible instrument of the Inclusion OMC. Member states are expected to draft NAPs around commonly agreed EU objectives on a regular basis (initially every two years and currently every three years). It is the role of the European Commission, the executive branch of the EU, to analyze the policy progress of member states on the basis of a common set of social inclusion indicators. The Analysis of the NAPs and the policy progress of member states towards the common objectives are then translated into policy conclusions and recommendations, which are published in the annual EU joint report¹³.

This report is adopted every year by the Spring Council¹⁴, which is an annual gathering of the heads of government or state of each EU member state and is devoted to social and economic questions. In 2006 the thematic scope of the Inclusion OMC was broadened to include health, long-term care and pensions, and the common objectives were substantially revised and simplified. But the process in itself remained largely unchanged. Most academic research on the Inclusion OMC has focused on the impact of the visible policy process¹⁵.

It has created dynamics which are only related in a superficial way to the NAPs process, and which originate from activities that the European Commission funded under the Community Action Program Social Inclusion (2001–2006) and its successor, PROGRESS (2007– 2013). Most of these funded activities are aimed at strengthening the visible parts of the OMC by raising awareness of and increasing participation in the NAPs process. But there has always been some limited flexibility around using the funding to develop activities that can exploit the potential of the OMC beyond the NAPs.

Under these funding programs, several European NGOs have received core funding. At the start of the Inclusion OMC, five NGOs were funded, and at present around ten receive funding. Some NGOs, such as the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)¹⁶, concentrate heavily on the NAPs process ; while others,

such as FEANTSA, have developed a more independent course of action over the years, and concentrate on the NAPs process only in as far as it can help advance the cause they are working on¹⁷.

6. Awareness and Strategy from the Greek citizenry

The foundation of the City of Athens¹⁸ and two of the largest foundations in Greece are the leaders not only in making the problem well known to the Greek society but they are also providing really important solutions with their complete programs towards homelessness¹⁹.

6.1 S.R.C.C.A. (in Greek K.Y.A.A.A.)

The Foundation of the City of Athens Homeless was established under the name "Reception Center of the City of Athens Homeless" (W.C.C.A.H.) in 1999. However, he started his independent operation with its own infrastructure, separate and independent services budget in early 2005 after the approval by the Internal Service Organization by the Secretary of the Region are now under the name "Solidarity Reception Centre of the City of Athens".

The S.R.C.C.A. has three guesthouses. In two of them it is provided short term stay (3-6 months) to 180 people. The population group served, covers people aged 18-65, who are Greek identity holders.

The services provided are free and equal for everyone and relate to the use of bed in double or triple room in the hostel only to sleep, cleanliness of the room, changing linens, provide immediate breakfast, counseling and psychological support of the guest and mobilization for the rehabilitation and reintegration of Social Service Homeless Foundation.

The Homeless Foundation enables feeding in all groups, with priority given to those truly in need. Daily they provide 1500 food rations to poor and homeless Greeks and foreigners. The food is distributed twice a day.

The S.R.C.C.A. also organized the mission teams for external assistance on the road. The groups are active mainly in times of emergency (due to bad weather, etc.), and they give food, blankets and sleeping bags to those in need, including information on where to stay overnight.

Furthermore, these groups are organized according to international standards and consist of qualified personnel (doctors, social workers, nurses, etc.) or at least are in direct contact with them.

6.2 S. Latsis Foundation

Foundation John S. Latsi²⁰, wanting to contribute to the relief of the vulnerable groups of Greek society who suffer most from the effects of the current economic crisis, has implemented the Special Program of Social Solidarity "It is our duty" in collaboration with charities, holy Dioceses and Parishes, NGOs, local authorities and institutions involved in social welfare and health care.

The program focuses on the initial implementation phase, to Greek citizens living in regions of Attica and Thessaloniki that have been significantly affected by the economic crisis.

The aim of the Foundation are the actions of the Welfare, to relieve those affected directly and also to complement and enhancement of such activities carried out by state and non-carriers, or other charitable institutions of the country.

6.2.1 Feeding Programs

Key pillars of the program are individual food aid for the elderly and large families, single priority, families with unemployed members. In this area have been launched to date collaborations with the Food Bank-Foundation to Fight Hunger, the Life Line from Elefsina Center, the Center for Family and Child Welfare, the Voluntary Protection from Penteli Municipality, the Municipality of Social Welfare of Kifissia , Social Service of the Municipality of Elefsina, the church of Agios Efthimios Keratsini Nicaea Metropolis and the Metropolis of Neapolis and Stavroupoli Thessaloniki.

6.2.2 Collaboration with Institutions of Social Protection

The second pillar of the program is funding initiatives and broader support non-governmental organizations or institutions that have the expertise and ability to intervene in matters of social protection and solidarity in our country, with priority to the most vulnerable groups of the Greek population such as children that just got poor, homeless and unemployed. In this sector has already started implementing individual actions in cooperation with the Municipal Nursery of Athens, the nonprofit organization of volunteer "Camp Kids-Happy Youth" and the non-governmental organization "KLIMAKA".

Also in March 2012 it was signed the Cooperation Protocol of Intent between the Foundation and the National University of Athens for the planning, organization and implementation of joint programs, for strengthening the volunteer in Greece in the field of social solidarity, preventive medicine for younger ages and to finance short-term scientific research aimed at mapping and analysis of poverty and social exclusion at local level and developing workable proposals to address them.

6.3 NGOs PRAKSIS Program initiated by the Foundation “Stavros Niarchos”

The Purpose and the philosophy of the foundation²¹ is the completion of the institutions in addressing major problems of society.

The initiative and financing from the foundation started a pilot program that focuses on three areas: First, social Housing services for the prevention of "homeless" , second Open Homeless Centers (Day Centers) for the relief of people living on the street and third, food aid. The program is modeled on international best practices, and after extensive discussions with organizations that have long practical experience in dealing with these problems. The pilot project is innovative for Greece, both in terms of methodology and potential impact.

6.3.1 Special Framework Program of the NGO PRAKSIS

MKO PRAKSIS, through this program aims to support families at risk of homelessness. Through the provision of targeted support measures (psychological, social, financial literacy programs, job search programs), the Social Housing Program aims to help the families that are facing intensively the consequences of homelessness to maintain their home.

6.3.2 Day Centers

The operation of three (3) Open Homeless Centers in strategically selected locations in Attica (Athens Center, West End: Egaleo - Peristeri, south-east sector: Kallithea - Tauros) will be implemented according to their maximum effectiveness of the Program. The NGO PRAKSIS undertakes the action funded by the Foundation "Stavros Niarchos" for the immediate relief of the homeless.

Open Homeless Centers will operate only during the day and seek to offer basic services to their guests (psychosocial support, medical care, ability to use bathroom, washing, clean clothing, can rest, meals). All the above services are offered through networks and referrals, to ensure individual plan of action based on the maximum possible assistance and to build upon the existing social - privileged system, aiming at improving the living conditions of daily visitors.

For this reason the staff and the works council are going to have a main role in the implementation of the program of social housing.

7. The Current Situation in Greece

For this reason the staff and the works council are going The quantitative and qualitative data on the homeless population is rare in our country, which impedes the assessment of the dimensions of the problem, and suspends any attempt to design a comprehensive strategy to deal with²². In a relatively recent recording of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (April 2009) homeless in Greece was estimated at 7.720 people, a number that has called into question because it doesn't contains important categories of the typology ETHOS. The NGOs estimate the number of homeless in our country, 20,000 people²³.

The need to refocus and re-evaluate the offered services to vulnerable groups, such as homeless may be necessary due to various factors such:

- **Population changes:** In the region of Attica we see high growth rates, which are not only due to natural increase of population, but obviously the young people who come either from other parts of the country, either by immigrants. Specifically, the Athens Prefecture has the highest proportions of immigrants²⁴ as a percentage of the total population (10.5%) and this high influx of immigrants creates additional infrastructure needs (education, welfare, health, etc.)
- **Unemployment / employment:** The employment rate is increasing over time in Attica, but it still remains low employment rates concerning the older age groups (55-64 years). Unemployment in the Region according to data from the NSSG after 2001²⁵ is reduced to a lower level than the national average. From the above figures it's clear that despite the percentage decrease in unemployment of the structural characteristics persist and require the exercise of specific and

targeted policy, something which is also on the direction of EU. Within the Athens Prefecture unemployment is concentrated in the western sector of the region of SE - 10.3% - lower than the central area -9.4% - the South East area and the area (8.4 %).

- **Income:** The percentage of people living below the poverty line was nationally 20% in 2004. According to research by E.K.K.E²⁶ "Regional dimensions of poverty in Greece" (July 2005), the overall population is at risk of exclusion due to poverty stands at 21% for the whole country and for the Region Attica to 12.2%, respectively.
- **Population composition:** The aging population brings increased demand for long-term care. The aging index is particularly high in Attica (1.01 versus 1.09 for the whole country and 0.94 for the EU) and signals, outside the macroeconomic impacts, the need to redefine the structure and infrastructure of social welfare and health. The population around Athens area is comparatively more aged than the whole of the region.

7.1 Homeless and Houseless in Greece.

From the official record of 2009, homeless on the streets were **1.807 people** (23.4% of all homeless) and homeless people who **lack housing 974 people** (12.6% of all homeless people). According to the NGO «Praksis», today (only in Athens) homeless people counted more than **11.000** (Greeks and immigrants)²⁷. Requests for housing have grown significantly and are expected to get even further in the near future. On average every week there are around 18 to 20 new claims, while over 50% for those families, which on average consist of four members each.

Today, our knowledge towards the problem is well advanced and we are now able to talk about the causes responsible for someone to be left on the street. According to 2006 survey conducted by the NGO “**KLIMAKA**” a **sample of 200 people**²⁸ on the profile of homeless in Greece we see the following:

- They are mostly men, with an average age of 47 years.
- The vast majority of people living alone (single, divorced, widowed).
- The health status for more than half of them is bad and state that they usually suffer from medical problems (94%), dermatological (90%), psychiatric (63.5%), dependency (75%).
- 58% are not covered by health insurance and they think that if they need medical help will not be able to access the appropriate physicians.

For the homeless and houseless, according to European experience, the shelters play a key role in making the transition to permanent / independent housing and social inclusion. And talking about houses, we not only include those that offer just a bed but also include all the necessary support services that meet the specific needs of the homeless.

In Greece there is a significant lack of shelters, while the needs of the homeless population are large (especially in urban areas of Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras²⁹ and other Greek cities).

The housing situation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in our country are often dramatic. Despite the substantial size of the immigrant population, there was no public policy of housing. Estimates of Non-Governmental Organizations³⁰ the illegal immigrants and refugees are a high percentage of the total homeless population in Greece.

7.2 Insecure and Inadequate in Greece

Due to economic crisis the Greek households face severe difficulties in housing. The rising cost of acquiring and maintaining a home ownership, combined with arrears on loans and auctions have created an about-to-explode situation. If the auctions weren't "freezed" the last two years with relevant legislation³¹ people currently living under the threat of seizure of their home, in the future will be found literally on the road.

The data published in the Greek press alone are alarming: "Today there are more than 50,000 properties under the threat of an auction, from which the 20,000 on the first home³²."

For these properties have already issued orders for payment and are drawn up orders of seizure. It is characteristic that in the first 7 months of 2011 there are issued by the Court of Athens more than 16,000 orders for payment, when in 2010 the same court had issued about 23,000 orders for payment and in 2008 about 8000 orders. It is no coincidence that the consumer organization EKPIZO³³, besides the legal and advisory support offered to indebted households, has started (since the beginning of the year (2012)) a psychosocial support program for people living with the risk of losing their only residence or have been victims of violence³⁴.

8. The role of welfare systems

Welfare regimes vary between EU member states and there is some evidence that the nature of homelessness is influenced by those differences³⁵. Where welfare states are extensive, episodic/chronic homelessness may be smaller social problems because there is a bigger general welfare 'safety net' for groups such as people with a severe mental illness.³⁶

EU member states with extensive welfare services also employ joint working to meet the complex needs of groups such as chronically homeless people, drawing in a package of housing, health and related services from various agencies. In welfare regimes that are less extensive, services for episodically and chronically homeless people may need to be more comprehensive (i.e. act as an extensive 'welfare state' in miniature) because it is not possible to draw on general welfare services to the same degree.

However, despite considerable differences in welfare regimes, homelessness services and social housing provision, episodically and chronically homeless people often appear to have quite similar characteristics throughout Europe. High rates of severe mental illness, problematic substance misuse and low rates of social support are found among these groups in several European countries³⁷.

One possible implication of this pattern is that groups such as chronically homeless people tend to fall through most forms of welfare 'safety net', and where this is the case some specialist services may still be required for homeless people with high support needs.

9. Conclusion and Perspectives

The phenomenon of living without a house (**homelessness**) and exclusion from home (**houselessness**) is the most extreme form of social exclusion. Evidence from European and international organizations is daunting and constantly talk about growth trends in the number of homeless people worldwide and especially in Greece due to the recession and financial crisis.

Thus, the growing number of homeless requires the redesign and evaluation of existing services that they are functional, modern and competitive, mainly serve satisfactorily large number of homeless people.

These facts³⁸ may lead to a gradual increase in the number of homeless in our country, and if we don't face it and handle it³⁹, in time to implement a strategic plan at national level, establishing a coordinating organization to manage the actions, qualitative and quantitative improvement of existing services and strengthening of the funds, the problem of homeless may be one of the major problems of our city in the upcoming decades.

Developing a **National Strategy** will be implemented through a **National Action Plan** which will not only effectively address both the prevention⁴⁰ of factors that lead vulnerable individuals or groups to have no roof, but also will help in the restoration of the known homelessness, will be the key driver of activities by the coordinating organization.

The national coordinating organization could undertake the following indicative actions:

- **Evaluation of all agencies** providing related services and certification of the most remarkable of them, so this can be a criterion for the continuation of funding.
- **Distribution of actions** to ensure that no duplication of activities developed by organizations.
- **Design, implementation and coordination** of research on the issue and announcement of the results.
- **Representation of the country** in European and International forums, conferences, workshops.
- **Establishment and operation** of a national telephone number for providing useful information and help.
- Participate in the design of the **National Plan** for Social Inclusion.

Tackling homelessness in Greece as a particular social problem is relatively recent. Although the **Greek Constitution** (Article 21, paragraph 4) states that "the acquisition of a home by the homeless or inadequately housed is the subject of a care of the state" is not defined the institutional obligation of local authorities and central government **to provide housing** and **support** towards individuals⁴¹ or groups who either live on the street or at risk of becoming homeless.

In general terms, policies and services are inadequate and fragmented. The result of this is the lack of National Strategic Plan of Action to prevent the phenomenon also the absence of national coordination, guidance organ.

Until recently the homeless weren't recognized by the Welfare Services as a "particular social group." This recognition could provide them some state financial assistance, comprehensive insurance coverage⁴², while it would open the way for the recording and counting the homeless in our country.

The involvement of Local Authorities (Municipalities), Church, voluntary and non-governmental organizations is the one that can give hope to homelessness.

The services provided for the central structure could be:

- Day Center
- Day Hospital
- Telephone Line
- Mobile Unit on the Road Day & Night – Hostels
- Mobile Unit for Families on the Road - Family Hostel
- Mobile Unit for Mental Health
- Mobile Unit for Tuberculosis⁴³
- Training of Police Officers

10. Appendix

ETHOS - European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion

Homelessness is one of the main societal problems dealt with under the EU Social Protection and Inclusion Strategy. The prevention of homelessness or the re-housing of homeless people requires an understanding of the pathways and processes that lead there and hence a broad perception of the meaning of homelessness.

FEANTSA (European Federation of organisations working with the people who are homeless) has developed a typology of homelessness and housing exclusion called ETHOS.

The ETHOS typology begins with the conceptual understanding that there are three domains which constitute a "home", the absence of which can be taken

to delineate homelessness. Having a home can be understood as: having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (*physical domain*); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (*social domain*) and having a legal title to occupation (*legal domain*). This leads to the 4 main concepts of Rooflessness, Houselessness, Insecure Housing and Inadequate Housing all of which can be taken to indicate the absence of a home. ETHOS therefore classifies people who are homeless according to their living or "home" situation. These conceptual categories are divided into 13 operational categories that can be used for different policy purposes such as mapping of the problem of homelessness, developing, monitoring and evaluating policies.

	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	Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
			3.2 Temporary Accommodation	
			3.3 Transitional supported accommodation	
	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	Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status	
		5.2 Migrant workers accommodation		
	6 People due to be released from institutions	6.1 Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	
		6.2 Medical institutions (*)	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing	
		6.3 Children's institutions / homes	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	Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)	
		7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people		
INSECURE	8 People living in insecure accommodation	8.1 Temporarily with family/friends	Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing	
		8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy	Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling	
		8.3 Illegal occupation of land	Occupation of land with no legal rights	
9 People living under threat of eviction	9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented)	Where orders for eviction are operative		
	9.2 Re-possession orders (owned)	Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess		
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		
INADEQUATE	11 People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	11.1 Mobile homes	Not intended as place of usual residence	
		11.2 Non-conventional building	Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty	
		11.3 Temporary structure	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.



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