

## HC3.2 NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING HOMELESSNESS

### Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents an overview of strategies and major legislation tackling homelessness at the national and regional level, as reported by OECD and EU countries responding to the 2016 OECD Questionnaire on Social and Affordable Housing. Homelessness strategies are defined as policy documents setting out targets and actions to tackle homelessness, requiring links across policy sectors to be made.

### Key findings

*12 countries out of 35 surveyed have an active national strategy to combat homelessness, and in an additional 4 countries there are regional homelessness strategies.*

Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Luxemburg, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United States all currently have an active national homeless strategy in place.

Due to the distribution of competences across levels of government, Austria, Germany, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom do not have one single homeless strategy at national level, but they do have different ones at the regional level.

France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden all had national homeless strategies in the past which have now come to an end.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Switzerland did not report any homelessness strategies in place with the exception of Lithuania where the capital municipality has recently set up its own homelessness programme.

**Table HC3.2.1: National and regional strategies for combating homelessness**

	Homelessness strategy		
	Year	National level	Regional/local level
Australia	2016	There is no official homelessness strategy but the <i>National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)</i> commits the Commonwealth Government jointly with the state and territory governments to the achievement of outcomes including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion. Funding is available from the National Affordable Housing Special Purpose Payment (NAHSPP) and the 2015-17 National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH)	Most states and territories have developed strategies to address homelessness. Under NPAH, they are responsible for determining where services are located, which service providers are contracted, and the amount of funding each service provider receives under NPAH. All states and territories have developed a Project Plan setting out the strategic overview for the delivery of services and how they will address the priority areas.
Austria	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	All provinces have set up strategies. They cover different measures: emergency shelters, eviction prevention, strategy to provide direct access to permanent and safe accommodation in order to support empowerment and autonomy (e.g.: Vienna Housing First Initiative)
Canada	2016	The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a community-based programme aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to 61 designated communities and to organizations that address Aboriginal homelessness across Canada.	..
Chile	2016	The national homelessness strategy is part of the <i>Política Nacional de Calle</i> , with three main objectives: Preventing homelessness, Protection of individuals and social promotion of people living in the streets. According to the objectives, public policy for people living on the street focuses on three main areas: Habitability, Health and Employability.	..
Croatia	2016	There is no specific homelessness strategy in Croatia. Homelessness is tackled within the <i>Strategy for fight against poverty 2014-2020</i> .	..
Cyprus (a, b)	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Czech Republic	2016	The <i>National Strategy on prevention and fight against homelessness in the Czech Republic to the year 2020</i> was adopted in 2013. The strategy was developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs together with an Expert Group on Tackling Homelessness. The latter is still functioning in a supervisory and monitoring role.	There are no regional homelessness strategies, but some municipalities have their own strategies on tackling homelessness (e.g. the city of Prague).
Estonia	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Finland	2016	Different Governments have included the fight against homelessness in their programmes since 1999. Under the current <i>Programme to End Long Term Homelessness 2012–2015</i> , 11 cities are taking part in its implementation. The programme focuses on long-term homeless following 20 years of homeless strategies targeting other parts of the homeless	Municipalities have operational responsibility while regional/state authorities act as supervising bodies

	Homelessness strategy		
	Year	National level	Regional/local level
		population. Finland has implemented 'Housing First' principle which includes the conversion of former institutional shelters into supported housing with permanent tenancies	
France	2016	There is currently no official homelessness strategy in France after the end in 2012 of the <i>National strategy for homeless and poorly housed people, 2009-2012</i> . Nevertheless, the legal framework for tackling homelessness at national level is set by the <i>Law 2007-290 creating an enforceable right to housing and promoting social cohesion (Droit au logement opposable or DALO, March 2007)</i> , and the <i>Reinforced action plan for homeless people (Plan d'action renforcé du dispositif d'hébergement et de logement des personnes sans abri or PARSA, January 2007)</i> .	There are Action Plans for Housing of Deprived Persons at the level of the Departments
Germany	2016	There is no federal strategy on homelessness. National legislation sets out the obligations of municipalities in terms of social service provision. Since the mid-1990s, the <i>Social Code</i> has stipulated that all persons who are at risk of losing their homes are entitled to assistance - either in the form of loans or allowances for rent arrears. Police laws in the <i>Bundesländer</i> (regional states) oblige municipalities to provide shelter for roofless people	There are strategies in place at the level of the regional states. North-Rhine Westphalia for instance has a regional action plan on homelessness. It aims to develop innovative approaches and support municipalities to tackle homelessness. The main focus is the prevention of homelessness and access to housing.
Greece	2016	There is no homelessness strategy at national level. A concerted <i>National Strategy to prevent and combat the lack of housing</i> was drafted by the Technological Educational Institute of Athens for the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity. The final draft of the Strategy (with an Operational Plan) was submitted in May 2015 to the Ministry.	..
Hungary	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Ireland	2016	The Government's <i>Homelessness Policy Statement</i> emphasises a housing-led approach which is about accessing permanent housing as the primary response to all forms of homelessness. Furthermore, a range of measures are being taken to secure a ring-fenced supply of accommodation for homeless household and to mobilise the necessary supports, identified in the government's <i>Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness</i> (May 2014) and in the <i>Action Plan to Address Homelessness</i> (December 2014).	The Dublin Region has a Homeless Implementation Plan
Japan	2016	The central government is responsible for establishing the <i>Law on Special Measure for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i> and <i>Basic policy for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i> .	The local governments are responsible for establishing plans implementing the <i>Basic policy for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i>
Korea	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at	There is no reported homelessness strategy at

	Homelessness strategy		
	Year	National level	Regional/local level
		national level	regional/local level
Latvia	2016	There is no homelessness strategy in Latvia, services are provided within the social policies framework ( <i>Social Services and Social Assistance Law</i> )	..
Lituania	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	Vilnius has adopted a programme on homelessness for the period of 2013-2018, covering accommodation and reintegration.
Luxembourg	2016	The Government has adopted for 2013-2020 a National Strategy Plan against homelessness and exclusion connected to housing. The responsibility for the coordination of this plan lies with the Ministry of Family and Integration. Furthermore, according to the rent law of 2006, the municipalities have the mission to assure, as far as possible, housing to the people who have their residence on the territory of the municipality.	..
Mexico	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Malta	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
The Netherlands	2015	In 2006-2014 the Netherlands had a <i>National plan on homelessness</i> including the national government and the four biggest cities which have include half of the homeless population in the Netherlands. The Plan was expanded to 43 municipalities and their regions in 2011. From 2015 more tasks were delegated to the local governments.	..
New Zealand	2016	There is no formalised homelessness strategy at national level. However in Budget 2016, the Government announced NZD41 million funding over the next four years for emergency housing.	A number of local authorities have developed plans to address homelessness in their local areas. These generally involve a wide range of stakeholders working together to develop solutions to the particular issues that present in their individual regions (e.g.: the People's Partnership in Hamilton).
Poland	2016	The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy implemented the <i>Programme supporting development of homelessness problem</i> , which supports NGO's providing services in the field of homelessness.	There are local strategies for solving social problems including homelessness, implemented by Social Assistance Centres and financed by local self-governments.
Portugal	2015	National strategy for the integration of homeless people 2009-2015 – prevention, intervention and follow up.	Homelessness Local Planning and Intervention Centres (NPISA) have been established at the local level in the framework of the National Strategy, mainly covering urban regions
Slovenia	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Spain	2016	The <i>National Comprehensive Strategy for Homeless People 2015-2020</i> . The general objective is to reduce the number of homeless people from 22938 in 2015 to 18000 in 2020. The strategy has 5 strategic objectives and 13 strategic lines.	There are no regional strategies, but there have been strategic developments at the level of different autonomous regions (e.g. Catalonia Model for Attention to Homeless People 2010).
Sweden	2016	There is no up-to-date national strategy. The previous strategy was <i>Homelessness, Multiple Faces, Multiple Responsibilities – A Strategy to Combat Homelessness and Exclusion from the Housing Market, 2007-2009</i> .	There are strategies against homelessness at local level, in the largest cities.

	Homelessness strategy		
	Year	National level	Regional/local level
Switzerland	2016	There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	..
United Kingdom	2016	The four countries of the United Kingdom have adopted different laws and strategies to tackle homelessness	In England, the main legal provisions are contained in the <i>1996 Housing Act</i> , the <i>Homelessness Act. 2002</i> , and the <i>Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002</i> . Local authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for 'statutory homeless', i.e. unintentionally homeless households who fall into a 'priority need' category (such as households having dependent children, households with a pregnant woman, etc.). Furthermore, for those who are found not to be in priority need, but are unintentionally homeless, local authorities are required to provide advice and assistance "to support the applicant's own efforts to find accommodation." Legal duties to house homeless persons were further developed in Scotland, where local authorities since 2012 have a duty to find permanent accommodation for all applicants who are unintentionally homeless. To support the new legislation, the Scottish government during 10 years worked to increase the supply of social housing and to develop a "housing options" approach, i.e. increase ability of local authorities to offer support to maintain current tenancies, focusing on prevention of homelessness. Northern Ireland has a homelessness strategy for 2012-2017. Legislation adopted in Wales in 2014 focuses on prevention activities by local authorities.
USA	2016	<i>Opening Doors</i> is the nation's first comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness. It was presented to the Office of the President and Congress on June 22, 2010, and updated and amended in 2015 to reflect lessons learnt over the first five years of implementation.	..

Information is missing for Belgium, Bulgaria, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey.

a) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

b) Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Sources: OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing, 2016; OECD (2015); FEANTSA Country Profiles <http://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database>.

### Data and comparability issues

This indicator provides an overview of existing major homelessness-specific policies in each country, as of 2016. Only few basic details are provided for each country, but homelessness strategies can differ significantly in terms of approaches and concrete initiatives undertaken. For a more detailed insight and on content, approaches and commitments of homelessness strategies across OECD and EU countries, please see the documents below.

#### *Sources and further reading:*

FEANTSA, Country Profiles, <http://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database> (accessed on 21 November 2016)

Foundation Abbe Pierre and FEANTSA (2015), *An overview of housing exclusion in Europe 2015*, [http://www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/sites/default/files/content-files/files/chapter\\_2\\_-\\_homelessness\\_in\\_the\\_european\\_union\\_a\\_serious\\_situation\\_but\\_not\\_a\\_hopeless\\_one.pdf](http://www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/sites/default/files/content-files/files/chapter_2_-_homelessness_in_the_european_union_a_serious_situation_but_not_a_hopeless_one.pdf)

Bate, A. (2016) , “Comparison of homelessness duties in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland ”, *House of Commons briefing paper* CBP-7201, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7201#fullreport>

OECD (2015), *Integrating Social Services for Vulnerable Groups: Bridging Sectors for Better Service Delivery*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264233775-en>