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Introduction

During the Dutch Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2016 the Pact of Amsterdam was adopted by EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, with the objective to achieve a higher involvement of Urban Authorities in the creation of EU legislation, EU funding and knowledge sharing. The relevance of this involvement is highlighted by the statistics that urban areas now house more than 70% of all Europeans.

Urban areas are today the drivers of innovation and the European economy but also the battleground for many of the societal struggles of the 21st century. In order to ensure that the urban dimension is reflected by EU legislation, funding and knowledge sharing, the Urban Agenda for the EU was created. The Urban Agenda is composed of 12 priority themes essential to the development of urban areas. Each theme has a dedicated Partnership, which brings together urban authorities, Member States and European institutions. Together, the Partnerships aim to implement the Urban Agenda by finding workable ideas focused on the topics of EU legislation funding and knowledge sharing. One of the partnerships is the **Partnership on Urban Poverty**.

The Partnership on Urban Poverty consist of 23 members which represent Member States, Urban Authorities, Regions, stakeholder organisations at EU and international level and the European Commission. More specifically, members are:

- 5 Member States: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, and Spain.
- 7 Urban Authorities: Birmingham (UK), Daugavpils (LV), Kortrijk (BE), Keratsini-Drapetsona (EL), Lille (FR), Łódź (PL) and Timisoara (RO).
- 2 Regions: Brussels Capital Region (BE), Ile de France Region (FR).
- 7 Stakeholder organisations: EAPN, Eurochild, FEANTSA, UN Habitat, Eurocities, EUKN and URBACT.

The European Commission: DG for Regional and Urban Policy and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Belgium (PPS Social Integration) and France (CGET, General Commission for Territorial Equality) coordinate the work of the Partnership.

Objectives, focus areas and activities

Although cities are hubs of opportunity as they enhance the advancement of science, technology, culture and innovation, they are also places where problems such as unemployment, social exclusion, segregation and poverty are concentrated. The majority of EU policies have an impact on urban areas, having a relevant potential to prevent and tackle urban poverty through direct and indirect action (e.g. considering the impact of social, economic, spatial, or energy policies). In order to make the most of this potential there is a clear need to consider the urban dimension in all the relevant policy fields, at all decision-making levels (EU, MS, regions, and urban authorities), and along the whole policy process (definition of the priorities, design of the instruments, implementation and evaluation).

The Urban Agenda for the EU defined its objectives in the context of Urban Poverty, as “to reduce poverty and improve the inclusion of people in poverty or at risk of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods”.¹ It further defined the scope and focus areas of the Agenda with regard to this

¹ Pact of Amsterdam, page iii

thematic priority. According to the Pact of Amsterdam, “Urban poverty refers to issues related to structural concentration of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods and solutions that need to be designed and applied with integrated approach:

- Place-based solutions: urban regeneration of deprived neighbourhood;
- People-based solutions: socio-economic integration of people living in neighbourhoods.

The focus will be on: spatial concentration of structural poverty in deprived neighbourhoods (and regeneration of these areas) and child poverty”.²

Building upon the above definitions and as result of a scoping phase, during which the Partnership has explored themes and challenges linked to Urban Poverty, the Partnership has agreed upon four thematic priority areas. Overall, the ambition was to develop actions and proposals for future legislation, instruments and initiatives, which could integrate both an area-based approach (i.e. urban poverty as a spatial phenomenon) and a people-based approach (i.e. urban poverty as a phenomenon affecting some groups of people more harshly than others).³

The **four specific priorities** endorsed by the Partnership led to the establishment of four Working Groups, each focusing on one theme. In addition to the focus areas identified by the Pact of Amsterdam, the partnership decided to focus also on two extreme forms of poverty and social exclusion by giving particular attention to Roma people and the homeless. Thus, the priorities endorsed are:

- (1) Child poverty;
- (2) Regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods;
- (3) Homelessness;
- (4) Vulnerability of Roma people⁴.

For each of the above-mentioned theme, the Partnership – through four Working Groups - has identified bottlenecks, policy gaps and elaborated potential actions, taking into account the Urban Agenda’s focus on *Better Regulation*, *Better Funding*, and *Better Knowledge*. Thematic linkages with other partnerships have also been explored.

As a result, 13 actions have been developed by the Partnership to date. 2 actions relate to Child Poverty, 2 actions cover the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, 2 actions deal with homelessness and 3 actions tackle the vulnerability of Roma people, and 4 actions are integrated actions which cover all priority areas,

This Background Paper serves as background information to the Public Feedback on the 13 actions developed by the Partnership on Urban Poverty. Stakeholder feedback will be considered by the Partnership for the development of the final Action Plan, which will be published on Futurium in Autumn 2017. **Only online submissions will be taken into consideration.**

² Ibid.

³ In the context of this document, Action should be considered as follows: Action should address a real need: an important issue, have real and visible impact and concern a larger number of Member States and cities; Actions should be new: no ‘recycling’ of elements which have already been done or which would be done anyway; Actions should be ready to be implemented: Clear, detailed and feasible; a study or a working group or a network is not considered an action.

⁴In the context of this document, the term “Roma” is used in its most commonly used definition at EU level and refers to “a number of different groups (such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom) also including Travellers, without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups”. France, coordinator of the Partnership, considers the terminology “Roma” as imprecise because it refers to heterogeneous situations and encompasses populations with very different socio-economic backgrounds, and prefers a non-ethnic terminology such as “highly marginalized European populations in mobility”.

1 Integrated actions

1.1 Action 1: Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Block Grant for Urban Authorities To Fight Poverty

1.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The effectiveness of European Funds is crucial for the regeneration of deprived urban neighbourhoods. Urban regeneration projects are complex because of the need to adopt an integrated social, environmental, economic, and multi-level approach. These possibilities are very limited under the current funds regulations for the period 2014-2020. For that, the support system should be improved in the next financial perspective, addressing the following pitfalls:

- EU Funds lack concentration to effectively address urban poverty in deprived neighbourhoods, delivering a leverage effect based on the concentration of resources per inhabitant. The current regulation of the ESF is fragmented and optional with regard to the support of social inclusion and economic development (regeneration of deprived urban areas);
- The current ERDF minimum allocation at national level (5%), as well as the potential ESF allocation, are not sufficient to have a real impact on urban deprived areas. The regeneration of urban deprived areas is not targeted explicitly, and some integrated urban development strategies lack a dimension to fight urban poverty;
- In the current framework the ERDF and the ESF lack the necessary flexibility to address through comprehensive and solid strategies the complex causes of urban poverty and their spatial concentration in deprived neighbourhoods.

1.1.2 Action

The Urban Poverty Partnership proposes to establish a Block Grant as the funding instrument to use Structural Funds under a new Urban Thematic Objective (see Action 7: “Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Setting up a new Urban Thematic Objective”). The strategic and governance mechanism proposed to implement this objective and pilot this instrument would be the Local Pact (see Action 8: “Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Local Pact for the Regeneration of Urban Deprived Areas”). In addressing sustainable urban development the Block Grant will have a specific focus on fighting urban poverty. The Block Grant fulfils the need for a clear, ambitious and targeted funding to fight urban poverty.

The proposed Block Grant would have the following characteristics:

- **Multi-fund:** combining or pooling resources from different EU funds (typically the ESF and the ERDF) to achieve leverage in the regeneration of urban deprived areas.
- **Flexible:** through Local Pacts, Block Grants would have the necessary flexibility to adjust to local needs and changing challenges, to combine sectoral policies and to involve all the local stakeholders. For example, enabling re-granting would improve the involvement of the private sector, NGOs, and the development of local initiatives. The Block Grant would be managed by urban authorities (where applicable in the governance structure of the Member States) with flexibility.
- **Integrated:** the Block Grant would focus on integrated urban development approaches and not on thematic concentration. The Block Grant would fund comprehensive strategies developed by

urban authorities to tackle urban poverty, and as part of it, regeneration of urban deprived areas. A part of the allocation will be dedicated to fight urban poverty based on integrated area-based urban regeneration strategies developed by urban authorities in the context of the Local Pact (see Action 8). Another part will be earmarked to undertake explicit actions at city level in the fight against child poverty (this way, we guarantee that there is sufficient investment in children), homelessness and exclusion of Roma. Remaining funds can be used to address other relevant aspects or inclusion of vulnerable groups in order to reduce poverty in their territory. The allocation of the Block Grant to each of these concepts will be based on a solid diagnosis developed by urban authorities and shared with relevant stakeholders.

Allocations of funding to beneficiary urban authorities should not only be based on GDP but other indicators should be taken into account to better measure economic, social, and environmental disparities and needs.

The implementation of the Local Pact (Action 8) and this Block Grant depends to a great extent on the ability of partner urban authorities, their budgets and qualified technical staff. Supporting these aspects and simplifying them in the context of the creation of the new urban thematic objective of the Cohesion Policy (Action 7) is important to strengthen urban authorities' involvement in these instruments. A part of the technical assistance allocation in the future should be devoted to support and/or reinforce the capacity building of urban authorities, especially the small and medium sized ones.

1.2 Action 2: Setting up one-stop-shop in EC website on data on urban poverty based on national observatories experiences

1.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Poverty has a spatial dimension, but there is a lack of open access and awareness of the possibilities to comparable statistical data about poverty, disaggregated at sub-municipal level (district, neighbourhood, census tract, postal code, zip code, etc.). This lack of reliable and comparable data on the spatial and territorial aspects of urban poverty, including data on intra-neighbourhood level, exists also at national level.

Some Member States (France, United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, etc.) have developed different online visualization or mapping tools (GIS: Geographical Information Systems) that allow local authorities and citizens to have access to poverty indicators at Sub-City District (SCD) level, allowing them to identify their deprived neighbourhoods and to compare their indicators with the national or regional averages.

Most of local authorities in Europe need to have access to poverty statistical indicators with the sufficient spatial disaggregation that would allow them to identify deprivation more precisely. It concerns especially, small and medium size urban areas with less capacity and awareness on how to find and develop relevant knowledge to fight urban poverty. All this useful information should be made available on one unique European website, one-stop shop.

1.2.2 Action

This action proposes setting-up of a European network of observatories monitoring both people-based and place-based aspects of urban poverty, which would be useful to inform policies on



evidence-based approaches. In particular, setting up an informal network of National Observatories of Urban Poverty/Deprived Neighbourhoods could give the opportunity to exchange visions, ideas, innovative approaches, etc. between the national coordinators of the Observatories of Urban Poverty/Deprived Neighbourhoods.

For Member States interested in creating a National Observatory, the network could also be useful to inform about methodologies and possible obstacles and solutions to establish these observatories. The mid-term perspective would be to constitute a sort of Member States task-force delivering advises, orientations and guidelines on urban poverty data; Eurocities will be also associated. This group of Member states should constitute a kind of task force making the link with EUROSTAT and facilitating and supporting the involvement of national authorities responsible for the development of statistics.

In order to make available and easily accessible to local authorities the outputs elaborated by the National Observatories network (methodologies, tool-kits, indicators etc. on urban poverty), one unique European website functioning as one stop shop should be set up by European Commission. One of the functions of the one stop-shop website will be to value and to communicate widely the outputs of the National Observatories task force (guidelines, tools, baskets of indicators) and to make them available for urban authorities with free and easy access.

1.3 Action 3: Further development of EU-SILC to incorporate comprehensive and specific indicators related to child poverty at the local level and to harmonise data collection on homelessness

1.3.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Recent years have brought new and growing attention to the importance of measuring and monitoring children's well-being and homelessness, two of the priorities identified by the Urban Poverty Partnership. Indicators are increasingly valued as a means to interpret and present statistical data, monitor policy implementation, and provide the ground for evidence-based policies and increased accountability.

Despite progress, there is still a lack of indicators covering some specific domains related to the implementation of children's rights and to homelessness, which could be used to develop and shape policies and services at national and local level, by identifying objectives and setting targets against a clear timeline.

EU-SILC, provides data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions – domains which are inherently related to child poverty and homelessness. Since 2010, EU-SILC has been used to monitor poverty and social inclusion in the EU, in particular through the Open Method of Coordination (Social OMC) and the Europe 2020 Strategy.

While EU-SILC has been widely used to monitor progress towards tackling poverty and social inclusion, such an instrument presents substantial gaps that call for the system to be reviewed and updated.

In the case of child poverty for instance, EU-SILC only covers people living in private households, limiting the outreach of the data and, therefore, its potential to provide an exhaustive and

comprehensive overview of the situation of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In other words, statistical instruments such as EU-SILC, due to their inherent gaps, result in a lack of reliable information with regards to the situation of children and young people in the EU, as they do not provide culturally sensitive data, i.e. data related to specific groups of children, such as those who, due to their circumstances (e.g. living in institutions, homeless children) or characteristics (e.g. children with disabilities, children with a migrant background or belonging to an ethnic minority).

With regards to data on homelessness, Member States collect data using different methodologies, which means that data is not harmonised. For example, an increase by 5% of homeless in one EU Member State does not equate to 5% increase in another country, as methodologies and definitions differ. A unified approach to collecting data will be very useful in monitoring the fight against homelessness. The lack of reliable and harmonised data on homelessness is an obstacle to the assessment of the impact of policies addressed at reducing homelessness.

1.3.2 Action

The action aims at ensuring that indicators on the basis of which statistical data is interpreted and analysed through EU-SILC, are further developed and harmonised.

With regards to child poverty, indicators should be based on a wider range of factors and be able to underline the specific situation of different groups of children on the basis of their age, gender, ethnic background, disability and other variables. In other words, indicators should provide the necessary tools to analyse how policies and services are impacting on all children, taking into account their economic, physical and cultural differences. It is necessary to update and revise the current statistical systems to include sufficiently specific indicators to identify the needs and demands of each group of children, particularly the most disadvantaged.

With regards to homelessness, Member States should be encouraged to implement the ad hoc module on retrospective housing difficulties developed by Eurostat and EU-SILC. Member States should be encouraged to use ETHOS Light as a tool to harmonise data collection. This will ensure that each country is using the same definition of homelessness when monitoring homelessness (taking into account its different typologies).

1.4 Action 4: The provision of statistics on poverty to local authorities, including data on Roma and homelessness

1.4.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

It is only possible to accomplish the recommendation of the Leipzig Charter to “pay special attention to deprived neighbourhoods” if local authorities can identify these areas in their territory. Poverty has a spatial dimension, but there is a lack (either in European or/and in national statistics) of reliable and comparable statistical data about poverty, disaggregated at sub-municipal level (district, neighbourhood, census tract, postal code, zip code, etc.). Local authorities need to have access to poverty statistical indicators with the sufficient spatial disaggregation that would allow them to identify deprivation more precisely and to understand its causes in order to design urban regeneration plans able to address the problems identified. The provision on data should include statistics about Roma people and about homelessness at local level.

Data on numbers of Roma living in Europe and their profiles remain scarce and are at best point in time snapshots. Only few data collections, like the 2011 EC/WB/UNDP data collections ensure comparability. This is mainly due to the restriction, or in some countries prohibition, of collecting data based on people's ethnicity. This leads to a lack of knowledge regarding the Roma community and its situation, making it difficult to take measures in order to tackle the obstacles they may face, for example in accessing basic and local services. By not having access to Roma-related data, evidence-based policy-making that could contribute to Roma inclusion is limited. Furthermore, the absence of cooperation between EU institutions and local authorities in data collection renders the task of finding solutions to local needs for Roma integration and bottom-up strategies much more challenging.

Also policy-making to tackle homelessness faces the lack of harmonized information. In fact, there is no EU agency collecting data on homelessness. Each year FEANTSA and the Foundation Abbé Pierre publish the report "An Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe". It could be an excellent source to monitor developments in European housing sector. However, each Member State collects data using different methodologies, which makes impossible developing comparative analysis. In addition Member States base data-gathering on different definitions of homelessness.

EUROSTAT has developed a range of statistical indicators covering most aspects relating quality of life in European cities (demography, housing, health, labour market, education, environment, etc.). The data collection exercise (*Cities*, formerly known as *Urban Audit*) contains 171 variables and 62 indicators at city level, derived from the variables collected by the European Statistical System. Data are provided by national statistical institutes, the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, and Eurostat. Data availability differs from topic to topic, as they are provided by Member States on a voluntary basis. The open access database of indicators at city level is available at the EUROSTAT website .

EUROSTAT has also developed a data visualization tool for European urban areas, called *Regions and Cities Illustrated*, which shows some indicators at city level and allows their comparison and analysis using bar charts, scatter plots or distribution plots.

EU data collection systems additionally gather useful statistical information through surveys. One of such systems, EU-SILC (see Action 3), provides data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. Since 2010, EU-SILC has been used to monitor poverty and social inclusion in the EU, in particular through the Open Method of Coordination (Social OMC) and the Europe 2020 Strategy.

ESPON analysis and databases related to urban poverty provide relevant additional qualitative analysis to the statistical information mentioned. All these indicators and information sources are useful for the comparison of urban areas as a whole, but do not allow the identification of deprived neighbourhoods within a city, as they are not based on statistical information on poverty disaggregated at Sub-City District (SCD) level (district, neighbourhood, census tract, postal code, zip code, etc.). *Cities/Urban Audit* is collecting at the moment data at SCD level, but it will be available only at a later stage. For the time being, statistical data on SCD is not available on the EUROSTAT website and only some Member States have decided to allow unrestricted access to it through their national statistical institutes.

The most relevant instruments developed at EU level specifically with regard to Roma people are the following:

- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has collected data on Roma through its Roma survey, the European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), in 2009, 2011, and 2016. While the sample of Roma people surveyed was sufficiently large (8,000 interviews to Roma people), data was only collected in 9 EU Member States because of methodological reasons (random sampling for this type of HH survey required a sufficiently large population size). The FRA is planning to carry out a new Roma survey in 2018.
- The FRA has been recently asked by the European Commission and the Council of the EU to collect data also from the other 16 EU Member States that were not considered in the MIDIS survey. In 2017, the FRA is starting a data collection process to cover the remaining 16 Member States, using different sampling and data collection methodologies so that quantitative data can be collected wherever possible (getting at least qualitative data in the countries where quantitative data is not available). This will be done through the FRANET research network and through external contractors.

At the moment there are not instruments concerning an EU-local level cooperation for data collection on Roma, but there is willingness from both the FRA and Eurocities to remedy this need. In 2016, the Court of Auditors published a report on data protection legislation and collection of data on the basis of ethnicity. The findings and recommendations from this report can be used to design appropriate data collection methods and tools for gathering local data on Roma at EU level.

1.4.2 Action

For the identification of deprived neighbourhoods and social exclusion, local authorities need to have access to poverty statistical data on income and living conditions, child poverty, homelessness, and the specific Roma situation at SCD (Sub-City District) level in order to be able to map and analyse the spatial dimension of poverty. The specific main actions required are:

- Urban authorities need to have access to poverty statistical information with the highest degree of spatial disaggregation available. Although there are several indicators related to poverty, one of the most relevant is income. Most Member States have detailed information about income with sufficient spatial disaggregation to allow its analysis at SCD-2 level (or neighbourhood, census tract, etc.), but few of them have made them available open access. For this reason, the development of the *Regions and Cities Illustrated* tool at SCD level (preferably at SCD2 level) and the inclusion of poverty indicators (or at least, income) in this tool is considered crucial. The existing *Cities/Urban Audit* working group seems to be the best platform to explore the possibility to make this data available in *Cities/Urban Audit*.
- This statistical information should adopt a multidimensional perspective since poverty and vulnerability have several causes that -alone, or in combination- mean that people may be at risk of exclusion. For this they could address: AROPE indicators; existence of shantytowns or housing with inadequate conditions; degree of incidence of the Ethos typologies; Educational level, early school leaving and segregation; etc. Many countries have developed specific studies addressing specific issues that may be relevant at national scale.
- It is necessary to disseminate the statistical information in the different Member States languages, so that it is fully accessible to local authorities and citizens. Although urban authorities with more resources may have the capacity to develop their own mapping tools,

this is not the case of small authorities. In this regard, some Member States have developed online visualization or mapping tools (GIS: Geographical Information Systems) that provide local authorities and citizens poverty indicators at SCD level, allowing them to identify their deprived neighbourhoods and to compare their indicators with the national or regional average. For the cases in which this kind of tools is not available in the Member States, it is extremely important that data are accessible in *Cities/Urban Audit* in the national languages to urban authorities.

- A specific action that needs to be undertaken by Eurostat is the development of an indicator (or a set of indicators) on the risk of poverty and social exclusion at NUTS II and NUTS III levels. The new indicator(s) should be developed in collaboration with local authorities and Member States.
- All the above mentioned information should be easily accessible to urban authorities and other actors on the EU one stop-shop urban data portal to access urban relevant information (see Action 2).
- Regarding data-gathering on Roma people it is necessary to give place to action that: i) guarantees a long-term collaboration between local authorities and EU-level agencies such as the FRA and Eurostat, aiming to develop and implement a methodology able to provide local authorities with the correct tools for collecting data about Roma people at local level. Relevant national authorities should also be involved whenever necessary.; ii) The mentioned methodology should aim to gather data not only on the numbers of Roma people living in their respective territories, but also on the challenges they face to access basic and local services. ; iii) In developing this should be taken into account the national strategies on social inclusion of the Roma people defined so far, some of which, like the Spanish, include intermediate assessments with specific analysis in key areas for inclusion (such as education or employment), which can serve as a basis for the new European data and indicators framework, particularly in relation to methodological aspects or about information collection. This will enable evidence-based policy and concrete measures for improving Roma inclusion.
- Regarding the development of statistics on homelessness it is important to advance towards reliable and harmonized data in the EU taking into account what has been pointed out above on the development of statistical information on urban poverty, and the definition of adequate methodological frameworks for the specific analysis of homelessness. The development of this recommendation has to be implemented taking into account Action 3 of this Action Plan.

2 Child Poverty

2.1 Action 5: Adoption of a European Child Guarantee

2.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The 2013 *Recommendation Investing in Children, Breaking the cycle of disadvantage* (IC-BCD Recommendation) is the most recent instrument adopted by the European Commission in the field of child poverty, recommending Member States to “organise and implement policies to address child poverty and social exclusion, promoting children’s well-being, through multidimensional strategies”. According to the IC-BCD Recommendation, Member States should develop these policies by acting in an integrated way along three pillars: access to adequate resources; access to affordable quality services, and; children’s right to participate.

Even though a number of initiative to tackle child poverty exist, overall, there is a lack of political and financial investment in children and young people at EU level (and at other levels of government), which implements integrated investment and adopts a children approach based on the 3 pillars of the *IC-BCD Recommendation*. This lack of investment is leading to unchanged poverty levels with children being the age group most affected by poverty.

The positive evolution of employment rates in the EU in the recent past, “is not reflected in poverty figures”.⁵ The rate of children at risk of poverty and exclusion (AROPE) is not improving significantly in the EU, as figures are not improving for the general population. Employment strategies – which have been strongly prioritised by the EU and Member States – are not sufficient to tackle poverty. The problem is thus the unbalance between the level of commitment to strengthening the labour market versus the level of commitment to structurally tackling poverty through an integrated rights-based approach that ensures access to quality jobs, services and social protection and commitment to redistribute tax/benefit policies.

2.1.2 Action

If Europe wants to «act big»⁶ on child poverty, it needs to foster shared responsibility between all levels of government and encourage the establishment of a Child Guarantee, which takes into consideration the European Pillars of Social Rights.

The Child Guarantee can be the tool to realise concrete investments that benefit children and young people in Europe. In order to do so, the EU and Member States must recognize that investing in children in the early years is a key strategy to tackle poverty as a whole and offer equal opportunities to all EU citizens. Investing in children is smart and inclusive. There is strong evidence pointing to the fact that the “return on investment” is higher when you invest in the early years. At the same time, it ensures equal opportunities to all children, reducing the impact of determining factors of child poverty (e.g. the household type, the level of education of parents, monetary poverty, migrant background and living conditions).

The action requires acting on a number of separate sub-actions:

⁵ Joint employment report from the Commission and the Council accompanying the Communication from the Commission on the Annual Growth Survey 2017

⁶ in the words of the recent European Parliament Resolution on the European Pillar for Social Rights.

- Define a set of realistic objectives and measurable targets that are associated with these objectives;
- The EU and Member States commit to guaranteeing children's rights as a cornerstone to tackle the poverty rate in the EU;
- The EU and Member States' commitment shall be supported by adequate funds (intermediary and/or pilot measures could be financed by the re-allocation of ESF and/or ERDF unallocated budgets). The use of these funds will be closely monitored and evaluated.
- Member States have in place a child rights-based national plan or strategy for the fight against child poverty, which demonstrate ownership from all levels of government and across sectors; national plans could be complemented by local plans for the urban authorities where child poverty is rising or already very high.

The action further implies that:

- Member States must acknowledge all levels of government have a role to play and should be duly involved in any strategic or reform process in relation to tackling child poverty (vertical integration).
- Member States must pay particular attention to the challenges faced by their urban areas and local authorities: their services and staff are at the frontline of dealing with the majority of households facing poverty.
- Child poverty must be addressed with the involvement of civil society organisations. The involvement of beneficiaries or those directly impacted by poverty is also important.
- Public investment is needed in a context still driven by austerity and cuts. To further promote investment in children, extra flexibility should be considered in the monitoring of national budget expenditure (Stability and Growth Pact), for example by excluding certain forms of social investment (if not indefinitely, at least temporarily) and specifically investments that concern children from Member states' deficit control mechanism.

The Urban Poverty Partnership – as a multi-level entity composed of representatives of urban authorities, regions, states, Commission and NGO's – stresses here again the importance of working together for a common goal.

2.2 Action 6: Progress towards a directive on investing in children based on the Recommendation Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage

2.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The 2013 Commission *Recommendation Investing in Children, Breaking the cycle of disadvantage* (IC-BCD Recommendation) is the most recent instrument on child poverty adopted by the European Commission in the context of the Social Investment Package (SIP). In this document, the Commission recommends Member States to “organise and implement policies to address child poverty and social exclusion, promoting children's well-being, through multidimensional strategies” in accordance with a number of guidelines or framework. This framework includes :

1. A set of horizontal principles that should guide the development of policy/reform.
2. Three pillars. Member States should act on namely access to adequate resources (acting on households' income), access to affordable quality services (acting on the provision of services to children in the areas of ECEC, health, housing, education, care settings) and

children's right to participate (in recreational-sport-cultural activities and in decision making "that affects their lives").

3. More/better governance, implementation and monitoring arrangements.
4. Full use of EU instruments including existing funding opportunities.

The Child Guarantee (envisaged under Action 5) would be a valuable step in the right direction but it wouldn't cover all pillars, aspects and policy mechanisms cited in the Recommendation IC-BCD. As such, the Recommendation is a comprehensive, integrated, child-rights-based set of soft policy measures but it has not led to significant reforms at national and/or regional level with direct impact in urban areas and significant decrease of child poverty.

2.2.2 Action

In order to have a real impact in the fight against child poverty in urban areas, the partnership advocates to go one step further than the above-mentioned Child Guarantee and to strengthen the legislative body at EU level in order to promote the effective implementation of children's rights in all EU Member states by introducing: first, robust monitoring in the European Semester of an indicator related to investment in children and second, moving towards a directive on investing in children.

The partnership proposes a two-phased approach. In a first phase, the European Semester should include strict monitoring of reforms based on a new indicator related to investment in children. In a second, medium to long term phase, the Recommendation should be taken a step further and should constitute the basis of a Directive under the European Pillar of Social Rights that recognises, as one of its key principles, children's right to protection from poverty and the necessity of specific measures to enhance equal opportunities of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This regulation, as a comprehensive and binding body of legislation will enact Member States' engagements in relation to children's rights (CFR).

3 Regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods

3.1 Action 7: Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Setting up a new Urban Thematic Objective

3.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The Cohesion Policy for the programming period 2014-2020 has been structured (and is being implemented) around 11 thematic objectives supporting growth. Each of the Structural Funds prioritises different objectives (ERDF 1-4, Cohesion Fund 4-7 and 11, ESF 8-11, although ESF can also support objectives 1-4).

The funds are challenge-oriented, not territorially-oriented, especially those that focus on urban deprived areas. In fact, in Article 7 of the ERDF, there is not a specific urban objective in which action to tackle urban poverty could be framed.

The funds oriented to the implementation of regeneration strategies within the framework of the Cohesion Policy, and particularly the ERDF and the ESF, do not share the same logic of intervention, making it difficult for local authorities to combine funding from both sources in the context of integrated initiatives which tackle the complex challenges of deprived neighbourhoods through a holistic approach.

This results in segmented strategies for urban areas, and difficulties to manage integrated strategies, particularly when the ERDF and the ESF need to be combined.

3.1.2 Action

This action proposes setting up a new urban thematic objective in the Cohesion Policy post 2020. It will support integrated strategies avoiding ERDF and ESF segmentation and allowing the combination of financial resources for the regeneration of urban deprived areas. Taking into account that the new instruments should be simple to be implemented to national authorities, regions, and urban authorities. They also should make possible the active engagement of the citizens and local population to gain credibility, ownership, as well as effective grass-root initiatives.

The regeneration of urban areas affected by urban poverty should be a priority in the next programming period of the Cohesion Policy (post 2020) under the new proposed thematic objective,(Action 7) which would see an increase in the minimum national allocation of the ERDF (currently 5%) and also introducing a minimum national allocation of the ESF for sustainable urban development.

The new urban thematic objective in the Cohesion Policy post 2020 will address sustainable and integrated urban development through the definition of a simple regulatory framework able to overcome the sectoral approach and substitute it for a territorial and area-based understanding of urban deprivation with a focus on fighting urban poverty. Actions within this thematic objective will be funded under a Block Grant for urban authorities to fight urban poverty (see Action 1).

The new urban thematic objective should be defined by the EU, Member States, the regions, the urban authorities, and other relevant stakeholders with an important implication of the UPP. Urban authorities must be able to develop a shared analysis and diagnosis related to urban poverty with the support of relevant authorities so that they are taken into account in the final definition of the urban thematic objective.

The identification of the urban deprived areas should be done at least by national authorities (Member States) in collaboration with the local authorities based on their diagnosis and strategies.

3.2 Action 8: Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Local Pact for the Regeneration of Urban Deprived Areas

3.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The convergence and the socio-spatial consequences of impoverishment concentrate poverty in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In order to address this challenge, it is necessary to tackle urban poverty adopting a place-based approach that takes into account all the inhabitants and their necessities (people-based approach). The fight against urban poverty should be formalised on the basis of integrated urban place-based interventions in the context of a EU urban poverty reduction policy that adopts a targeted and integrated approach towards the most deprived neighbourhoods. However, under the current Cohesion Policy (2020), urban authorities face a number of obstacles to develop relevant approaches to tackling urban poverty:

First, urban authorities do not count with the necessary flexibility to address the complex causes of urban poverty through integrated urban regeneration programmes. Integrated sustainable urban development strategies are managed centrally, at the level of national operational programmes co-funded by ERDF. The territorial impact of the actions implemented in deprived areas is not sufficiently taken into account.

Second, urban authorities do not always apply a place-based approach in their urban regeneration strategies. Under the ERDF Regulation, urban authorities can implement Integrated Territorial Interventions (ITI), but this instrument is not been successful in organizing and implementing at the same time multi-fund and area-based approaches.

Third, EU funds are too dispersed, while a higher spatial concentration and intensity would be more effective to address urban poverty in deprived neighbourhoods.

3.2.2 Action

The regulation of the funds should include an explicit reference to tackle poverty in urban deprived neighbourhoods in the new post-2020 period. This policy should be integrated in the new Urban Thematic Objective of the Cohesion Policy for the post 2020 period proposed by the UPP (see Action 7: “Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Setting up a new Urban Thematic Objective”). The results should reduce the economic and social gaps within urban authorities, strengthening social cohesion and social inclusion in the EU.

In order to address urban poverty in urban deprived areas under the new Urban Thematic Objective of the Cohesion Policy, **the UPP proposes the creation of Local Pacts for the regeneration of**

urban deprived areas in a *multi-level, strategic, and multi-annual* perspective for the period 2021-2027.

The Local Pact gives urban authorities a leading role in the design of their strategy to address poverty in the context of EU funding, along with other stakeholders (public authorities of different levels, inhabitants and third sector). Through the Local Pact, urban authorities can lead the discussion on which urban deprived areas should European Funds be concentrated. The identification of these areas should be done at least by national authorities (Member State) in collaboration with the local authorities based on their diagnosis and strategies.

The Local Pact would have the following characteristics:

- Mixed place-based and people-based approach: Upgrading the urban deprived areas should be done understanding the needs and difficulties felt by people in poverty situation and living in deprived areas, as well as on analysis of the causes. The Local Pact would enable the design of adequate strategies (including appropriate quality services) based on the integration of a place-based and people-based approach.
- Multi-fund: The Local Pact would combine or pool resources from different EU funds, typically the ESF and the ERDF, achieving leverage effects in the urban regeneration of deprived areas.
- Flexible: The Local Pact would enable adjustments to local needs and to the evolution of changing challenges. It would also combine sectoral policies.
- Multi-level: Local Pacts address both city-wide challenges as well as specific challenges of urban deprived areas. They involve several levels of government (local, regional, national) and different types of stakeholders, fostering in particular the participation of the “smaller” ones, including non-for-profit and grass root organizations involving the people directly affected by urban poverty. Local Pacts should also be participative, through the setting-up of Local Committees of Users and Inhabitants (LCUI).

The Local Pact aims to give place to integrated urban regeneration interventions including the following four dimensions to tackle urban poverty:

1. Urban regeneration/living environment. These strategies will be aimed to integrate the deprived neighbourhoods in the dynamics of their urban agglomeration by reinforcing their residential attractiveness, the quality of the services, and the quality of the standard of life and social mix. Important aspects of this dimension include living environment, public space, housing, transport, equipment, facilities, services and economic development.
2. Social cohesion. This dimension focuses on vulnerable social groups (jobseekers - particularly young people-, lone parents -particularly women-, migrants, etc.), the fight against child poverty, and the integration of homeless and marginalized communities. It includes education, employment, health, integration, and access to jobs and skills.
3. Inclusive economic development. This dimension refers to action fostering the economic potential of UDAN. It will aim to foster the establishment of economic activity and business creation in urban deprived areas, to improve integration with local and internal dynamics and support transition to formal economic activities.
4. Environment/energy. This dimension will tackle challenges such as energy efficiency in housing and urban regeneration programmes, fight against climate change, urban farming and resilience, among others.

The Local Pact will be tested through an URBACT Pilot Action. The URBACT method could be useful for modelling, testing such a partnership framework and designing some guidance for the upcoming programming period.



4 Homelessness

4.1 Action 9: Ending homelessness by 2030, through the reform of social inclusion strategies at the national level

4.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Homelessness is on the rise across the EU, yet there is no EU target to end homelessness and policy makers at national level are not encouraged to fight this problem. In 2010, under the Presidency of Belgium, a European Consensus Conference on homelessness led to the identification of a comprehensive set of principles and recommendations to effectively put an end to homelessness. Following the conference many EU bodies (European Parliament, Committee of Regions, Economic and Social Committee, EPSCO council) supported its results. To date, this conference is still a reference in the way forward to end homelessness, notably acknowledging the efficiency of housing-led policies. These “policy approaches identify the provision and/or sustaining of stable housing with security of tenure as the initial step in resolving or preventing situations of homelessness. Moreover, metrics for measuring poverty generally exclude homelessness, while social inclusion strategies to access EU funds are required to include people who are homeless.

Experience shows that the active engagement of European, national and local policy makers in the fight to end homelessness in the EU needs to be i) underpinned by a specific target detailing both a deadline and the reduction to be achieved and ii) incentivised through the distribution of European funds.

The EU has an anti-poverty target for 2020 in which it aims to lift 20 million people out of poverty, yet currently the European Commission is not set to meet this target. Notably, the draft of the European Pillar for Social Rights recognises the right to shelter and to housing for all individuals within the EU.

Beyond the European level, each Member State and the EU as a whole, has committed under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 to end poverty in all forms by 2030, this implicitly includes a commitment to end homelessness, an extreme form of poverty in the EU. While setting an EU target to end homelessness is not new, and only clarifies existing international commitments, its re-affirmation is an important tool for policy makers, at all levels, to use to ensure homelessness remains a top priority.

4.1.2 Action

At EU level, a target is needed to motivate all relevant stakeholders to end homelessness. The lack of specific targets under the Europe 2020 Strategy, in a time where homelessness has grown significantly throughout the EU, shows that in the absence of targets specifically on homelessness, policies and strategies will fail to reduce it. Re-affirming the target to end homelessness in the EU further encourages policy makers at European, national and local level to pursue other actions proposed by the Homeless Working Group.

“Homelessness” can be a disputed term. What constitutes homelessness is clearly defined and agreed upon in the ETHOS Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. This typology should be a reference for all actions pursuing the end of homelessness, understood as falling under four

categories : rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing. When reaffirming a target, it should be made clear what constitutes “ending homeless”. It is proposed that it should include the following i) no one sleeping rough, ii) no one living in emergency accommodation for longer than an “emergency” situation, iii) no one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for a successful move-on, iv) no one leaving an institution without housing options and v) no young people becoming homeless because of the transition to independent living.

At national level, Member States that request the use of European Structural Funds must be asked to develop National Social Inclusion Strategies that include specifically an aim of the inclusion of homeless persons. This action will incentivise the Member States to consider the vulnerable situation of these people as well as encourage policy makers at the local, regional, and national level, to request increased resources to invest in evidence based solutions and push for the use of harmonized data collection (see Actions 3 and 4).

Member States should be encouraged to develop and implement an integrated strategy for ending homelessness in line with the recommendations put forward during the 2010 European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, shifting from the “management” of homelessness towards the effective end of homelessness. In this respect, Housing led and Housing First policies should be encouraged. The development of National Strategies will empower urban authorities and regional actors in the pursuit of ending homelessness. The causes of homeless can often be triggered by national level policies, but the solutions often come from the local level.

4.2 Action 10: Capacity building for the use of the EU funds to end homelessness

4.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Capacity Building for effective EU Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) in the fight to end homelessness: the ERDF, the ESF and the FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the most deprived) could provide a lever for better progress in reducing and ending homelessness. They could help shift from “managing” to “ending” homelessness, for example building capacity to shift from the staircase model of providing homeless services to housing led and housing first. Ending homelessness requires boosting investment in prevention and ensuring that people who become homeless are provided with proper, evidence based, housing solutions.

To date funds have not been used to the maximum of their efficiency for this purpose. The so-called “creaming” effect means that ESIF rarely reaches people in the most vulnerable situations. Some excellent practices exist. However, the opportunity to invest ESIF in supporting people to sustainably exit homelessness, has not been fully seized. Capacity Building for the use of the funds, in the context of homelessness, can act as a simple but important step in assisting actors at the Member States and local levels to use the funds more efficiently.

European Funds have the capacity to be used in the context of preventing and fighting homelessness. However, only in a small portion the funds focus on this issue. Moreover, investments made are not always in line with the established evidence base on how to actually end homelessness. There is a lack of knowledge and shared practices about how the European Funds can be used in the context of homelessness, specifically in utilising the funds for housing led solutions.

4.2.2 Action

Managing authorities and those responsible for the implementation and management of the funds will benefit from training on the use of the funds focusing on homelessness. Topics covered will include:

- How to end homelessness.
- Multi-fund programming.
- Blended financial instruments.
- Unit Costs.
- Transnationality.

A special effort will be made to focus the attention of the capacity building seminars on the use of housing led solutions and housing first. A gradual shift has been seen in recent years towards the housing first model of service provision, this shift can be accelerated using the funds.

This action will be facilitated through a series of seminars on addressing homelessness with the ESIF; Multi-fund programming, blended financial instruments, unit costs and transnationality are all key topics. The seminars will be organised by the European Commission, supported by FEANTSA and other potential experts including managing authorities, beneficiaries, members of the Urban Poverty Partnership of the Urban Agenda for the EU, the EIB etc.

5 Vulnerability of Roma people⁷

5.1 Action 11: Adoption of an Integrated Roma Framework from a Multi-Level Governance Approach

5.1.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

Under the EU Roma Framework that runs until 2020, Member States have committed to develop and implement National Roma Integration Strategies. To date, the main problem is the lack of integrated and coordinated approach to Roma integration, as current national strategies are a collection of thematic actions and projects relevant for Roma (on housing, on employment, on education, on healthcare), but often lack a coordinated, integrated approach. As such, the national strategies promote a fragmented approach to Roma inclusion. This is an issue because some policies can have competing or conflicting objectives and thus generate adverse effects to Roma integration.

In other words, it is not sufficient to divide relevant actions or funding in themes of housing, education, employment and health, but these areas need to be connected into an integrated framework that takes into account the diversity at local level, and at the same time addresses core horizontal issues such as discrimination against Roma and their lack of participation. Roma inclusion should be mainstreamed in inclusive policies and services for all people. Mainstreaming a Roma inclusion perspective in sectorial and development policies is more effective than adopting sectorial Roma integration policies.

The EU, national and local authorities, should work together to make Roma integration a transversal issue across policy sectors and across departments, by means of an integrated framework.

5.1.2 Action

There is a need for a long-term vision on the integration of marginalised Roma people in our societies and to make them an objective for our communities. This vision can be realized through: i) the integration of policy, legal and funding instruments in a renewed EU Roma framework post-2020 that should promote a coherent approach to Roma integration; ii) the mainstreaming of the Roma perspective in all policies. The focus should be on integrated programmes and policies to replace thematic one-off projects.

While the focus would be on mainstream policies from an inclusive approach, a particular emphasis on the specific problems, needs and degree of deprivation of Roma (e.g. Roma children) should remain; this would mean bringing a 'Roma lens' into all mainstream policies to ensure they are inclusive for Roma people.

The EU framework post-2020 should adopt an integrated approach to Roma integration with a multi-level governance coordination, by joining efforts of national governments to those of regional and local authorities. The integrated approach should consist of a coordinated strategy and action plan across ministries. This means that Roma concerns should be mainstreamed into education, employment, health, housing and other relevant policies. Mainstreaming should be ensured and

⁷ For the definition of Roma people in this document see Footnote 4, page 2.

monitored both at EU level as well as at national and local level. Services need to be joined up and actions coordinated (e.g. education, employment, housing) at all levels of government to achieve real improvement in the lives of Roma people.

This new EU approach to Roma integration should be applicable to all EU Member States. Member States should continue to update and improve their national Roma integration strategies by adopting a coherent, integrated approach, they should also find effective ways to mainstream the Roma perspective into all relevant policies.

5.2 Action 12: Strengthening the desegregation principle in EU urban areas

5.2.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

In European urban areas, marginalised communities face multiple forms of exclusion, and their living arrangements are often concentrated in space. Therefore, many groups, among them Roma and other ethnic minority groups, live spatially segregated and generally in much worse housing conditions as the majority of society. Roma and other marginalised groups often suffer also from educational segregation, which not only impedes social interaction with the majority of society but also means education of significantly worse quality and high early school dropout rate.

Educational and/or residential segregation results in worse outcomes in educational levels, labour market participation, health, and in growing poverty. Beyond physical separation, social separation is exacerbated by unequal access to mainstream, inclusive and high-quality services. In the case of marginalised Roma groups across European urban areas, these problems have led to wasted resources and unbalanced social, political and economic developments.

The Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) sets out the obligation of all Member States to combat discrimination and prevent in particular discrimination based on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin notably in social protection, education and access to and supply of goods and services, including housing. ESI Funds cannot be used to perpetuate segregation, which falls within the scope of discriminatory treatment. Moreover, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 - Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) obliges the Member States to prevent any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, during the preparation and implementation of programmes.

In practice, the most explicit tool to support actions against segregation is a (non-binding) set of recommendations in the Commission's '*Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation*' for better planning, more effective local level implementation and monitoring.

5.2.2 Action

For the forthcoming implementation period of ESI Funds (2021-2027), the desegregation principle should be strengthened by mainstreaming it into the legislation, building on local level planning and implementation lessons learnt from local best practices.

According to this legislation, national and local governments should assess the level of residential and educational segregation in their urban areas and introduce adjustments to their planning and investment strategies to combat it. They should align policies by fully committing to the core recommendations of the Guidance Note, most importantly, by considering the desegregation principle as the first option in all housing and educational programmes.

Consequently, urban authorities in their comprehensive strategy should include concrete measures mitigating housing and educational segregation. For example, in the field of housing, supply of social housing in integrated neighbourhoods should be increased, mobility of Roma families from segregated neighbourhoods to integrated neighbourhoods should be promoted whilst settlements in worst conditions should be eradicated. School district design and enrolment incentives should serve more balanced opportunities for children to enrol in quality education options.

In countries, where the relevant policy fields do not fall to the local governments' competences, mechanism should be set up enabling urban authorities to efficiently influence/push the higher level policy makers to intervene nationally, regionally, and also locally in favour of desegregation.

5.3 Action 13: Ease urban authorities' access to EU funding in parallel to introducing local ex-ante conditionalities regarding – among others – Roma inclusion

5.3.1 Bottleneck to be addressed

The EU requires Member States to set Roma inclusion strategies at national level. It would not be justified to require such strategies at local level generally, but it is justified to require strategies from urban authorities that are faced with high levels or high risk of poverty and exclusion of Roma. Urban authorities, being closer to the problems and knowing better the potential solutions than central governments, could use EU funds more effectively.

However, for various reasons, national and regional authorities are often reluctant to give access to appropriate EU funding and sufficient flexibility to urban authorities to determine the ways how ESIF resources should be spent. Moreover, local authorities found difficulties to implement EU instruments according to the regulations of the European Funds, mainly because of the red-tape and complexity of the formal procedures to access funding, to develop the programs, and to report about expenditure justification.

5.3.2 Action

In order to demonstrate that urban authorities are able to plan and implement Roma inclusion programmes and thus use EU funds effectively, local ex-ante conditionalities should be introduced in the ESIF legislation after 2020.

Local ex-ante conditionalities can be introduced with the ESIF legislation after 2020. The advantage of the action is that it improves linkages between policies and funding. Urban authorities which fulfil the ex-ante conditionalities should get more direct access to sufficient EU funding to implement their integrated plans for Roma inclusion.

The setting-up of financial instruments for financing the integrated strategies should also be explored in a complementary way and in articulation with the allocation of EU funds. The specific formulation of local ex-ante conditionalities depends on the architecture of the ESIF legislation after 2020.