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National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion

Bulgaria

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European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

**ESPN Thematic Report on
National strategies to fight
homelessness and housing
exclusion**

Bulgaria

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Summary

In Bulgaria, the problems of homeless people are very low down the priorities for social inclusion and are essentially not recognised and addressed by the state. It was only at the end of 2018 that a formal definition of a homeless person was adopted in an official document – the Social and Solidarity Economy Act. According to this definition of homelessness, people living rough, in emergency accommodation, and in accommodation for the homeless are considered homeless people. No official statistics on the number of homeless people are currently being collected; nor are there any analyses of the trends and factors that lead to homelessness, or of the demographic profile of homeless people.

The problems of homeless people are not only explained by the lack of housing but are largely related to the lack of any housing policy in Bulgaria. A national housing strategy for 2018-2030 was drafted in 2018, but it has not yet been adopted. It sets as its specific objective 2: 'Providing affordable housing. Direct support to vulnerable groups'. The housing strategy is linked to other existing strategies, including the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion, which addresses the need for legal regulation of homelessness and the provision of affordable housing for all citizens, affirming that homelessness and housing deprivation are one of the extreme forms of poverty and social exclusion. For this reason, adopting a housing strategy is key to at least initial steps to reduce homelessness and improve the social inclusion of homeless people, as well as tackling other illegal housing issues that most often affect the Roma communities.

The lack of statistics on the number of homeless people makes it extremely difficult to plan and find durable solutions for their social reintegration. In practice, they remain invisible to state policies and society. Too little importance is still given to indicators such as housing costs and housing overcrowding, which are covered by European, but not national, statistics. At the same time, the statistics made available as part of the analysis in the draft national housing strategy show that the housing stock in Bulgaria is relatively good, with an increasing share of uninhabited housing due to internal and external migration.

The only strategic document where the problem of homelessness is formulated is the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion for 2020 (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2013). But actual working measures to implement the strategy have clearly not been taken so far, and the problem remains serious. There are no specific measures in the strategy that could even identify the scale of the problem, such as adopting statistical indicators for homelessness and a profile of the homeless. This clearly shows a lack of commitment by the state and a refusal to honour its own commitments on the issue of homeless people.

Bulgarian society is not sensitive to the problems of homeless people, as they are considered to be extremely marginalised, though very often their individual stories show that they have not been in such a situation for their whole lives. Due to the many social problems associated with other vulnerable groups and the political unpopularity of the topic, homelessness has never been the focus of political interest and has not been the focus of a particular programme or strategy.

There is still no link between national strategies and local funding. Largely, municipalities are charged with the care of the homeless and they also manage social housing, but they do not really have enough resources to support them and to run independent policies. Support to homeless people is given mainly by non-government organisations (NGOs) and charitable organisations. There are few opportunities for long-term solutions and the reintegration of the homeless into society.

A significant part of the problem of homelessness concerns illegal buildings in Roma neighbourhoods. Rather than finding a long-term solution, this situation is used as a political tool in times of ethnic and social tensions. A large part of the Roma population lives in buildings that are unsuitable for housing; many of them do not have a permanent

address and registration, which makes them homeless in practice. That is why it is so important for the state to quickly develop and adopt a national strategy for the prevention and reduction of homelessness and to strengthen the opportunities for a long-term solution, supporting homeless people and families at the municipal level. This would be possible by creating alternatives for settling the inhabitants of illegal buildings and simplifying the administrative procedures to legalise their homes. In addition, it is crucial to expand their access to social services and provide accommodation in existing buildings that are suitable for habitation, where possible.

1 The nature and extent of homelessness and housing exclusion

There is one single official definition of homelessness in Bulgaria, adopted at the end of 2018 in the Social and Solidarity Economy Act. It reads as follows: 'A homeless person is a person who does not own a home, is unable to rent a home with his/her own funds and is not placed in a municipal dwelling under the Municipal Property Act and/or due to incidental circumstances (fire, natural disasters, collapse of a building, etc.) has remained without shelter' (National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2018). There are no other definitions of homelessness in other national strategies.

People living rough, in emergency accommodation, and in accommodation for the homeless – except women's shelters or refuge accommodation and transitional supported accommodation (which is only a support option for young people leaving institutionalised care) – are considered homeless people, according to the definition in the Social and Solidarity Economy Act.

In some cases, people living in temporary structures could be considered homeless because the structures are illegal, which is the case in many Roma neighbourhoods. De facto, the inhabitants of such structures are not considered homeless, as this type of living situation is very often a practice that local authorities support or at least do nothing about. In times of social tension, these structures are often demolished as punishment acts against the Roma community. There are probably many hidden forms of homelessness in each of the other living situations across the six ETHOS¹ Light categories; but unfortunately no information is available on them and/or they are not considered as homelessness and treated like it, as seen in Table A1 in the Annex. For example, there is no collection of statistics or information about the situation of people in healthcare institutions, although it could be assumed that, among them, there are cases of homeless people treated for illnesses requiring long-term treatment for which the hospital receives payment from the health insurance fund.

There are no available data or official statistics on the number and profile of homeless people (see Table A2 in the Annex). Some data on homeless people as a specific category are expected from the next population census in 2021.

The Social Assistance Agency (part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) keeps statistics only on people using some kind of social support who have ID cards and documents, which leaves the majority of homeless people out of sight. According to unofficial statistics from the Caritas Foundation, there are about half a million homeless people in Bulgaria, but it is not possible to know what lies behind these numbers.

There are 13 temporary accommodation centres in the country with a total capacity of 617 places, and 2 shelters for homeless people with a total capacity of 70 places. During the winter season, they are full to capacity, so this is one of the few benchmarks for assessing the number of homeless people seeking shelter; but, again, these data do not give complete information on the extent of the phenomenon.

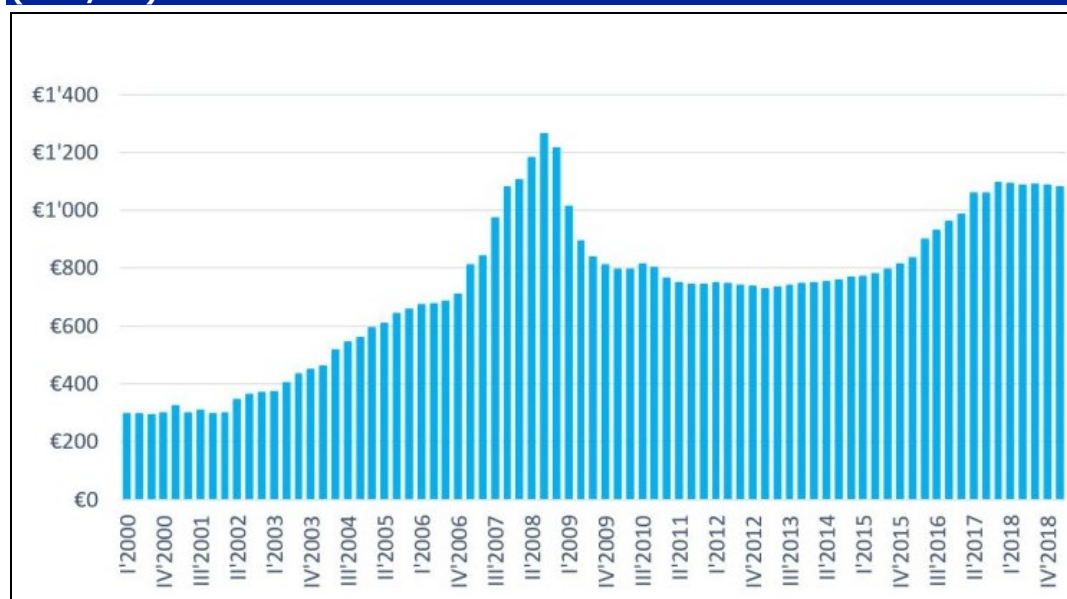
¹ European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion.

Because of the lack of statistics, no trend in terms of an increase or decrease in homelessness can be established. Managers of crisis centres and shelters feel that the number of homeless people increases every year. In view of constant internal and external migration, the deepening of the risk of poverty, and the increase in property prices to unreal values, this is probably the case. As shown in Figure 1, the average price of housing in Sofia was 1,100 EUR per m² for the period 2016-2018. At the same time, the monthly minimum wage in the first quarter of 2019 was just 580 BGN (290 EUR). Even for those on the average salary in the capital, the monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment almost exceeds 50% of their income. A family with two working adults can perhaps afford to spend 25% of their income on rent, but this is very difficult for individual tenants. Families with low or no income, meanwhile, are forced to seek rent-free accommodation or social housing – which is, however, limited and difficult to access.

According to the National Statistical Institute, the distribution of the population between municipalities is very uneven. There are 72 municipalities with a population of under 6,000 people, accounting for only 3.9% of the population. In contrast, the 9 municipalities with a population of over 100,000 people contain 41.0% of the population of the country. The population is thus almost entirely concentrated in the big cities, especially the capital, due to the economic decline of smaller settlements and their lack of both the opportunity for economic growth and access to various social, cultural, and educational services. Rents in bigger cities and the capital are higher, which puts more and more families at risk of social exclusion and of facing problems with housing and even homelessness.

113,471 persons changed their address within the country in 2017 (see Figure 2). The highest share was that of internal migrants aged 20-39 (34.9%) (typically young people and people with families with children of school/kindergarten age), followed by persons aged below 20 (30.9%) and aged 40-59 (16.1%). Those moving from 'town to town' made up the largest share (42.3%) followed by those moving from 'village to town' (24.2%) and 'town to village' (21.5%). The number and share of those moving from 'village to village' was considerably lower (11.9%). Among internal migrants, the number of people who migrated to Sofia (the capital) was the highest – 18,286. Districts with the highest shares of migrants to Sofia (capital) were Sofia (province) – 9.9%, Blagoevgrad – 7.0% and Plovdiv – 6.0%.

Figure 1: Average housing prices in Sofia, 1st quarter 2000-4th quarter 2018, (EUR/m²)



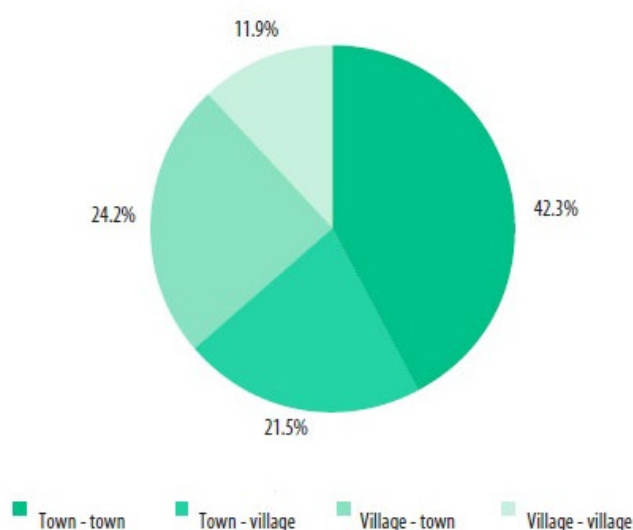
Source: *BulgarianProperties.bg* (2019).

Note: I, II, III and IV correspond to the first, second, third, and fourth quarters.

There has been no formal study of the profile of homeless people in Bulgaria. According to a pilot study conducted by the City Nomads Association through 50 semi-structured interviews in Sofia between May and June 2015, 34% of the homeless were women, 66% were men, 58% were over the age of 50, 28% were aged 36-50 and 8% were aged 26-35. The most common profile of a homeless person was a man aged 50-60, with extended work experience and secondary or tertiary education. More than half of the respondents were dealing with waste recycling and a quarter had some temporary employment. 82% were Bulgarians, 14% were Roma. This ratio is interesting because it suggests that Roma people are usually not considered homeless, although they often live in temporary or illegal buildings, whereas Bulgarians treat the lack of permanent housing as homelessness. There is also no indication of the geographical differences in homelessness, for example between the capital and major cities and the rural areas, or in smaller settlements and villages. Thus, it cannot be concluded whether homelessness is mostly an urban phenomenon or whether it affects all parts of the country, simply becoming more noticeable in cities.

Figure 2: Direction of internal migration in 2017 in Bulgaria

Direction of the internal migration in 2017



Source: National Statistical Institute (2018).

2 Relevant strategies and policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

There is no specific strategy or document addressing homelessness in Bulgaria. Homelessness is not a specific priority in Bulgarian housing policies. The problem of homelessness was formulated in the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion for 2020 (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2013), according to which one of the most extreme forms of poverty and social exclusion is homelessness and housing deprivation. While access to affordable housing is a basic necessity and right, ensuring this right is still a significant challenge, necessitating the development of appropriate and comprehensive measures for both preventing and dealing with homelessness. Services such as shelters and temporary accommodation centres are far from sufficient to support homeless people. There is also a lack of comprehensive services for homeless people or those living on the street to support them in finding work, education, healthcare, and social support. The living conditions of the Roma population as a whole are still significantly worse than those of the rest of the population. Their properties are generally in a very unsatisfactory condition – no bathroom, electricity, water supply and sanitation. Unregulated or missing infrastructure

in Roma neighbourhoods is a serious problem. The share of illegal buildings is high. In many cases, illegal buildings are connected to illegal electrical and water supplies and sewerage installations, which in turn poses a risk to human life and health.

Priority 8 of the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion was to improve the housing conditions of vulnerable groups and to support the homeless, which means providing adequate housing and infrastructure as well as efficient and good-quality services for homeless people, through a comprehensive and integrated approach to the development of cross-sectoral services – social, health, education, and employment – and basic access to housing.

Providing financial resources for the development of these services, as well as for access to housing, is an important precondition for both preventing and limiting homelessness.

The 2019-2020 action plan within the framework of the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion provides for the rehabilitation of 473 social housing units in urban areas. The goal is for 2,223 representatives from marginalised groups (including Roma) to benefit from modernised social infrastructure. However, this programme had already been promised in the previous reporting period but never implemented. The action plan also included a commitment to adopt the new housing strategy.

Funding is too limited and not aimed at preventing and solving homeless people's problems. The bulk of it goes to renovating social homes that are not accessible to many of the permanently homeless, due to very complicated administrative procedures. Shelters and centres for temporary accommodation are the only options for homeless people for now. In September 2014, the Council of Ministers decided to reduce by a third the financing of shelters in the country, which led to the closure of some of them.

The proportion of funding directed to homeless programmes is too limited to have a serious impact on the situation. Housing benefits in Bulgaria are a negligible proportion of total benefits. Expenditure is mainly on subsidised municipal social housing, which is offered at a reduced rent. Bulgaria has no real system of housing benefits, as shown by the sum of benefits paid to the population in 2016 – 426,000 BGN (213,000 EUR) for reduced rents, and zero for social housing.

EU funding is a promising opportunity for renovating and building social housing. As of March 2019, there were signed contracts in 9 municipalities for the construction of social housing and 1 shelter under the operational programme (OP) 'Regions in growth 2014-2020', priority axis 1 'Sustainable and integrated urban development'. An example of this is the investment of 3,000,000 BGN (1,500,000 EUR) in the municipality of Stara Zagora where, through the reconstruction of a former building of the meteorological service, 69 modern social housing units – 8 studios, 19 one-bedroom and 42 two-bedroom apartments – will be provided. These units are expected to accommodate a total of 232 vulnerable people and other disadvantaged groups, half of which will be for vulnerable people of marginalised communities, including Roma.

The social homes described above will be located in a closed complex, with security, 24-hour video surveillance and parking spaces. The rent for the furnished apartments will amount to 80% of the rent for a municipal dwelling, which is currently 60 BGN (30 EUR) per month. The term of their accommodation will be three years, and the residents eligible to use this social service will be determined by the special ordinance on the terms and conditions of accommodation of socially disadvantaged citizens, which was adopted by the municipal council in March 2018. Users of the service will enter into contracts with the municipality and will make specific commitments on social inclusion. The unemployed should be included in educational and qualification programmes and programmes for employment and social integration. Schoolchildren are to attend an educational institution. Individuals should have a general practitioner, and parents should ensure that their children are regularly immunised and their health status checked. The aim of the project is not only to provide shelter and normal living conditions for vulnerable, minority, and socially disadvantaged groups who do not have their own home and cannot

afford housing at market rates, but also to enable social housing users to be successfully integrated into society. Such projects are a promising step in the right direction, but they still need to be part of a sustainable and comprehensive policy.

There is planned monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion. Biannual reports on its implementation are also being prepared, but no progress has yet been made on the few targets and indicators that have been set. The EU indicators are not used in the current strategy and for monitoring of homelessness and housing exclusion.

3 Analysis of the current patterns of service provision and challenges in implementing Bulgaria's responses to homelessness and housing exclusion

There are no specific measures to prevent homelessness or that focus specifically on the social reintegration of homeless people as a specific category. There are mainly temporary accommodation centres and shelters. Some charitable foundations provide community-based mobile services, social kitchens, and various types of health and psychological help, clothes, and personal belongings. However, they are not part of any co-ordinated policy and provide only a temporary solution to the problems, as placement in these facilities is restricted to three months for both the accommodation centres and the shelters.

The municipalities have social housing, but access to it is complicated and difficult and, due to the limited number of units, they are mainly provided to families in need with children and not to already-marginalised homeless people.

Homeless people rely mostly on charities that have social kitchens and, in a few cases, offer other forms of social support such as psychological help and support for starting work in social enterprises, which are again inaccessible due to the degree of marginalisation of some of the homeless. Many homeless people do not have personal documents; this means they do not exist in the eyes of the state, and cuts off their access to social housing services.

Bulgaria lacks places in facilities providing temporary accommodation in case of emergency (e.g. shelters). The main institution of this type is temporary placement centres. Such centres exist in several big cities and are run either by municipalities or NGOs. The funds are transferred to the relevant municipality. The centres are generally overcrowded, especially in the capital. The clients of the centre are not allowed to stay in the centre for more than three months per year. They are very often long-term homeless people and, due to deficiencies in other areas of housing policy, have nowhere to go during the remaining nine months.

Temporary accommodation centres and shelters are mainly provided by the Social Assistance Agency through local municipalities (in bigger towns and cities), and NGOs and charities. Such services are provided by big international charitable organisations such as the Caritas Bulgaria Foundation and the Concordia Foundation.

One of the most developed networks of homelessness services is managed by Caritas Bulgaria, which supports homeless people by providing the following activities and services:

- for homeless people in Sofia, there is a mobile support centre for Caritas Sofia, which provides healthcare, social and psychological support, food, clothes, essential medicines, assistance in obtaining documents, assistance in finding temporary accommodation in shelters or crisis centres, contacts with social and health institutions, and research on tuberculosis and blood-borne diseases – HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and syphilis;
- in Burgas there is a centre for mobile and stationary care, which provides an opportunity for domestic hygienic care (using the shower, haircut, shaving,

washing clothes, and getting clean clothes), food and hot drinks, basic drugs and hygiene supplies, assistance in obtaining documents (ID cards for accommodation in care homes), guidance and mediation in relation to interaction with various institutions, counselling and assistance in job search, mediation with relatives, and the housing programme;

- in the town of Rousse there is a 'Good Samaritan' shelter provided by Caritas Rousse, which provides shelter, food, clothing, personal toilet facilities (bathing, washing), healthcare, social counselling, assistance in finding work and obtaining documents, and escorting to institutions; and
- for homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless in Rousse, there is the Caritas Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration, providing rehabilitation, psychological counselling, social and legal counselling, educational and vocational training, preparation and implementation of individual programmes for social inclusion, and occupational therapy – carpentry, organic farming, beekeeping, cooking, music therapy, and art therapy.

Planning and co-ordinating of services is divided between the Social Assistance Agency, which delegates services to be managed by the municipalities, and NGO service providers.

Most of the existing services, such as shelters and temporary accommodation centres, are funded by the state. NGOs also deliver services and, in the case of charities providing services, they fundraise for their services. There are no other service providers providing services for the homeless in Bulgaria.

Monitoring and evaluation of state services is the responsibility of the Social Assistance Agency.

Existing services, besides being largely insufficient, are mainly aimed at supporting people who have already lost their homes. Although psychological, health, and social services, as well as professional qualifications and job support, are offered in the temporary accommodation centres, these services are not sufficient to guarantee the reintegration of the homeless, because of both limited capacity and the very complicated administrative procedures requiring documents that are hard to access for homeless people. There is no system or set of policies for prevention that is specific to homelessness – which is understood as part of social exclusion and marginalisation, but for which there is no analysis of the causal factors or the demographic profile of those affected.

There is still no effective policy aimed at providing access to permanent accommodation for homeless people, partially because of the lack of a national housing strategy – which has been drafted but, for unexplained reasons, has still not been adopted. Social housing in municipalities is extremely poor and alternatives such as mobile homes, use of existing buildings, housing support, etc., do not exist or are not used. A similar problem, though not recognised as homelessness, is the problem of illegal temporary or permanent Roma housing. Politicians are usually tolerant towards them except in times of increased social tension, when buildings are suddenly demolished. The state of the Roma ghettos is very difficult – buildings are dangerous, there is no sewerage or running water, and electricity is often used illegally. In certain cases, the removal of buildings is justified, provided of course that alternative accommodation is provided for the families. In other cases, however, the condition of the buildings in the neighbourhoods is satisfactory; the constructions are stable, heated, electrified and with sewerage, and the owners pay taxes. However, due to lack of documents for ownership or construction, the buildings are considered illegal and subject to demolition. Legislation is very inflexible in this respect, but whereas local authorities are intolerant of illegal Roma buildings they do not apply the same strict measures to Bulgarians in illegal constructions.

An analysis by the Equal Opportunities Initiative Association of the legislation on the eradication of illegal buildings and the way it is actually implemented in Bulgaria, which

was aimed at establishing whether Bulgaria complies with EU law on protection against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, shows that a large part of the Roma population faces a constant risk of homelessness (Kashamov and Mihaylova, 2019). The Roma population in Bulgaria accounts for more than 10% of the total population, and most of them live in segregated neighbourhoods that are not regulated, which were built up chaotically and in violation of procedural rules. There is a lack of accurate statistics on the number of illegal residential buildings in detached quarters, but it is believed that they are at least a quarter of all dwellings in these neighbourhoods. This means that a large proportion of the population is at constant risk of homelessness, as the only housing of the family is at risk of being abolished.

There are no adequate alternatives for the affected families due to insufficient funds for municipal and social housing. Existing practices of abolishing illegal single Roma dwellings in detached neighbourhoods do not contribute to a lasting solution to the housing situation of the Roma minority, and are in contradiction with the country's long-term strategy for the integration of the Roma population.

Because the affected families remain homeless, they usually stay in the same neighbourhoods, initially housed by relatives. After a few weeks or months, they start building residential housing where their former homes were destroyed, or nearby. In this sense, the state and/or municipalities simply spend unnecessary funds from taxes on the destruction of buildings, and the housing situation remains distressing.

A recent case in the city of Gabrovo in April 2019, where three Roma men beat a Bulgarian salesman in a local store, led to mass disorder and to the burning and demolition of houses in the Roma neighbourhood. Entire Roma families with pregnant women, children, and elderly people were forced to leave their homes; they became homeless, fearing for their lives. In the case of Gabrovo, only some of the buildings were illegal and the Roma families had received assurances from the municipality before the riots that they would be accommodated in other homes. A similar case, attracting great public coverage, was in Voevodinovo in January 2019 when, as punitive action, the houses in a whole Roma neighbourhood were destroyed after two Roma youngsters had attacked a Bulgarian soldier. In very rough, snowy conditions and freezing temperatures, all the Roma children were left on the street without shelter and stopped attending school. It turned out that it had long been known that the buildings were illegal and a demolition order had been issued, but the municipality had not implemented it and had not found alternative accommodation solutions for the families. Such cases have become routine – demolition of the buildings takes place only at the time of elections or of social tension, in order to gain political advantage without offering any sustainable solutions.

There are a few positive examples from the NGO sector, such as the Trust for Social Achievement in Bulgaria, which received an annual global award from the Global Forum on Settlements for its project 'Urbanization – A Win for All', which is being implemented in the municipalities of Kyustendil, Dupnitsa, and Peshtera. It helps Roma families already living in stable buildings to legalise their housing in order to prevent its destruction, by using existing legal procedures. The Trust's opinion is that there is a need for legislative changes to help the process and to empower municipal authorities to solve such problems in their mandate without the need to exert further financial burdens on national authorities and municipal administrations.

There are no real forms of support for homeless people – either by supporting reintegration through facilitating the procedures for obtaining social support, or by providing sufficient types of accommodation such as social housing, affordable rented housing or support for rent for working families. However, Bulgaria's Social Housing Fund² is being replenished slowly through EU funding, mainly under OPs such as 'Regions

² The fund, established by the Ministry of Investment Planning, caters to the needs of families and persons with low incomes and specific needs, elderly people living alone, and disadvantaged citizens.

in growth 2014-2020' and 'Human resources development 2014-2020'. In March 2019, the 'Human resources development' OP invited applications for an integrated procedure 'Socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups. Integrated measures to improve access to education – component 2'. The municipalities of 39 cities that have concluded a contract to implement integrated urban development plans under the 'Regions in growth 2014-2020' OP are eligible to apply and will be supported in their social infrastructure projects by including social housing measures. The objective of the procedure "Socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups. Integrated measures to improve access to education" - Component 2 is to improve the quality of life of users, and to achieve better efficiency, complexity, and sustainability of results. The opportunities under three OPs – 'Human resources development', 'Regions in growth' and 'Science and education for smart growth' will be used for the implementation of the integrated measures and activities.

Despite an increase in the amount of uninhabited housing in smaller settlements, no alternative is sought for their use. Finding sustainable solutions for homeless people, such as ensuring jobs and professional qualifications, is difficult because the homeless themselves are almost invisible to the system. The lack of clear statistics on the number of homeless people and their needs makes it very difficult to work with this social group.

There have been no innovations at all in this sphere. As mentioned before, it is not recognised as a popular or important problem at the moment. Furthermore, after some renovations made to main boulevards and parks in the city centres of Sofia and other big towns, it became noticeable that municipalities were deliberately making the urban environment increasingly hostile to the homeless, by placing benches, parking elements and decorative elements that are made in such a way as to prevent homeless people from using them.

Weaknesses/gaps

- lack of information/statistics/analysis of the number, demographic profile, and needs of homeless people;
- lack of a systematic approach to the prevention of homelessness based on an analysis of the factors leading to homelessness;
- lack of political will to tackle the problems of Roma ghettos and illegal buildings;
- complicated administrative procedures for accessing homelessness services, for social housing, and for legalisation of illegal buildings; and
- lack of a unified strategy at national and municipal level to tackle homelessness.

Priorities for improvement

- establishing a unified national strategy for homelessness prevention, based on data and analysis identifying the essence of the problem in Bulgaria;
- adopting a national housing strategy, targeting the problems of homeless people and people at risk of social exclusion due to lack of accommodation;
- legalising, or creating alternatives for settling the inhabitants of, illegal buildings and breaking the current vicious cycle of destruction and homelessness;
- simplifying the administrative procedures at the municipal level to provide access to social services, create accommodation alternatives, and legalise existing buildings suitable for habitation; and
- expanding the number, type, and funding of services for supporting homeless people.

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Annex

Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Bulgaria

Operational category		Living situation		Definition	Defined as homeless in Bulgaria
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	Living on the streets or in public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters	Yes
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation	Yes
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided	Yes
		4	Temporary accommodation		Yes
		5	Transitional supported accommodation		No
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation		No
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing available prior to release	No
		8	Penal institutions		No
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	No
		10	Non-conventional buildings		No
		11	Temporary structures		Yes, with some differences: a large proportion of the Roma population lives in such structures but is not considered homeless
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	No

Table A2: Latest available data on the number of homeless people in Bulgaria

Operational category		Living situation		Most recent number	Period covered	Source
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	No data available	-	-
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	No data available	-	-
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	No data available	-	-
		4	Temporary accommodation	No data available		
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	Not applicable/No data available		
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	Not applicable/No data available		
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Not applicable	-	-
		8	Penal institutions	Not applicable		
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	No data available	-	-
		10	Non-conventional buildings	No data available		
		11	Temporary structures	No data available		
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	No data available	-	-

