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National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion

Slovenia

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European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

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

Slovenia

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Summary

There is no homelessness strategy in Slovenia, but there are the 'National Programme of Social Care 2013-2020' (Resolution on the National Programme of Social Care for 2013-2020, 2013) and the 'National Housing Programme 2015-2025' (Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015-2025, 2015). In general, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MLFSAEO) follows the 2004 ETHOS¹ definition of four conceptual categories of homeless people: roofless, houseless, in insecure housing, and in inadequate housing (including the operational sub-categories). The first three categories of ETHOS Light are commonly included in the definition, with the third category not including persons in women's shelters and refuge accommodation.

There are no accurate data on the number of homeless persons in Slovenia. Consequently, official data on the gender distribution or any other characteristic of homeless people – no matter how they are defined – are not available either. The MLFSAEO is co-funding a large number of programmes that provide for a comprehensive approach towards homeless people.

Formal, mainstream social services are part of the response to homelessness, which means that – although the services focused on the homeless are of low intensity and not supported by extensive funds – there are other services, including those directly provided by the state, that homeless people can access (Pleace *et al.*, 2018). Existing services provide comprehensive and flexible support according to people's support needs. Homeless people are also encouraged to participate in programmes organised for other focus groups if they also belong to them: violence prevention programmes, and programmes for drug or alcohol addicts, or for persons with mental health problems.

Alongside the stable subsidising of multi-annual verified programmes (12 in 2019), to which the main share of funds is allocated, the MLFSAEO also subsidises a number of developmental programmes based on annual public tenders (MLFSAEO, 2019a). In the spring of 2019, 18 programmes addressing the homeless were running. They included various kinds of support, but mainly housing support, fieldwork (street outreach services), day centres, counselling, and psycho-social support and assistance (MLFSAEO, 2019b). There are also 8 mothers' shelters programmes, 12 safe houses and 3 crisis centres, all of which belong to the network of violence-prevention programmes.

The existing services are effective in preventing and alleviating homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) (including prevention of evictions and rapid rehousing support) – at least as regards programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO – but limited by the available resources. Housing First services have been slowly extended, but they face the same problem as low-income people in general: the shortage of non-profit housing. The majority of homeless people are able to access healthcare services.

The main weaknesses/gaps regarding the approach to homelessness are: 1) a huge shortage of non-profit housing; 2) overlaps between programme users, and incomplete reporting of programme providers, which hinders the estimation of the total number of homeless people; and 3) the lack of surveys or other sources providing information on the characteristics of the homeless population. Consequently, the following priorities for improvement are proposed: 1) establishment of a particular funding source for non-profit housing; 2) a legal obligation for local communities to provide a certain number of adequate housing units and regularly publish calls for the allocation of non-profit housing; and 3) the introduction of a system for unique recording of users, which would allow for better identification and tracking through the system; and 4) financing of surveys to evaluate the extent of homelessness in Slovenia, the characteristics of homeless people and their need for support.

¹ European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion.

1 The nature and extent of homelessness and housing exclusion

1.1 Definition of homelessness

There is no homelessness strategy in Slovenia. In general, the MLFSAEO follows the 2004 ETHOS definition of four conceptual categories of homeless people: roofless, houseless, in insecure housing, and in inadequate housing (including the operational sub-categories). In the first national research evaluating the extent of (visible and hidden) homelessness in Slovenia (Dekleva *et al.*, 2010), this ETHOS definition was used, too.

Translated into the operational categories of ETHOS Light, the following categories are considered homeless in Slovenia:

1. people living rough;
2. people in emergency accommodation (overnight shelters);
3. people living in accommodation for the homeless (all living situations except persons in women's shelters and refuge accommodation);
4. people living in institutions and due to be released with no home to go to (not always counted as homeless);
5. people living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (not always counted as homeless); and
6. homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends due to lack of housing (not always counted as homeless) (Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2014, Table 3.2; Baptista *et al.*, 2017, p. 61).

This means that the first three categories of ETHOS Light are commonly included, except for the third category not including persons in women's shelters and refuge accommodation (see Table A1 in the Annex). These provisions are considered as social protection programmes in the field of violence prevention rather than programmes for the homeless. The other three categories (4th-6th) are not always counted as homeless.²

In the European Observatory on Homelessness study that evaluated the extent and profile of homelessness, only people who were registered as permanently resident at a centre for social work or a humanitarian organisation (because they had no address of their own) were counted as homeless in Slovenia (Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2014, p. 28). The definition of the homeless population was the same in the 2011 population census: persons registered at centres for social work or other humanitarian organisations, indicating thereby that these people did not have another permanent address or housing (Busch-Geertsema *et al.*, 2014, p.106).

A relatively good proxy – or an indication of the understanding of homelessness in Slovenia – may be the target user groups of existing programmes for the homeless. These are defined as:

- homeless and multiply excluded adult individuals and families (visible and hidden homeless people);
- people who, for different reasons, do not have adequate accommodation – reasons such as problems in the family, low education, low material status, unemployment, housing crisis, illness, psychiatric problems, disability, personality disorders, alcohol and illicit substances addiction, long-term hospitalisation and experience of imprisonment;

² In Table A1, the opinion of the top expert from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities was decisive for selecting YES or NO for categories 4–6.

- persons currently in housing distress: adolescents who reached the age of maturity and have fled from home, single women without the possibility of staying in a safe house, evicted families, people with a restraining order, etc.; and
- individuals residing in insecure accommodation (accommodation intended for homeless people or institutions such as prisons and hospitals) or with friends and acquaintances in their housing; and users of emergency accommodation who need professional support (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, p. 85).

The Roma are not perceived as homeless, though many of them live in non-conventional dwellings. There are other programmes for Roma and they are thus not the focus group of the social security programmes for the homeless.

The Ministry of the Interior takes care of refugee accommodation (there are about 200 refugees in Slovenia), and this is also another programme area.

1.2 Data on the extent and composition of homelessness and housing exclusion

There are no accurate data on the number of homeless people in Slovenia. The estimations are rough and based on different definitions of homelessness. According to Lozej (2017), none of the data related to homeless persons in Slovenia represent all homeless persons, and the figures include persons who are not homeless.

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) does not collect data on homeless persons. They publish data on 'occupants by type of settlement and housing arrangement', among them those 'living in another housing unit and the homeless' where 'another housing unit' means those that are not conventional dwellings or collective living quarters. There were 4,252 homeless persons and persons living in such housing units in 2011: 2,552 in urban settlements and 1,700 in non-urban settlements. In 2015, there were 3,513 such persons: 3,170 in urban settlements and 343 in non-urban settlements (SI-Stat Database, 2019).

The number of homeless persons registered at the centres for social work has been increasing. This is not necessarily the consequence of registering people who have just become homeless. It is very likely that many (or most) of them were users of social protection programmes for the homeless before, but they have later registered at the centre for social work³ because permanent residence in Slovenia is the condition for obtaining cash social assistance and other social and family benefits. At the beginning of 2017, over 3,000 people were registered there (Lozej, 2017). This figure underestimates the size of the homeless population since some homeless people do not have a registered residence, or have not de-registered their former residence. In addition, other people can be registered at the address of a centre for social work, such as tenants whose landlords do not allow them to register their actual permanent residence.

Only estimations based on the number of people included in the social protection programmes for the homeless, co-funded by the MLFSAEO, are available on an annual basis.⁴ These data are reported in Table A2 (in the Annex). In 2017, there were around 500-550 people living in overnight shelters, around 100-150 in transitional supported accommodation and around 1,200 in women's shelters or refuges (Smolej Jež *et al.*,

³ Alternatively, the homeless may register their permanent residence at a shelter/refuge.

⁴ Providers of these programmes report these data to the MLFSAEO, and they are published by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (SPIRS) in its annual reports on the implementation of social protection programmes. Counting of the number of homeless persons by the programme providers is not necessarily precise. According to Dekleva *et al.* (2010), the programme providers' annual reports are frequently filled out superficially and inconsistently. On the one hand, no one can remember the names of all the users (homeless persons) while, on the other hand, it is not appropriate to ask them for their names over and over again (Lozej, 2017).

2018, Table 3.4.4.). There are no data on people living rough, people living in temporary accommodation for the homeless, people living in institutions, people living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing, and homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing). People living in hostels⁵ and temporary accommodation for the homeless might be included among those living in transitional supported accommodation in the 2017 statistics (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, Table 3.4.4).

According to MLFSAEO (2017b), between 2,280 and 2,500 people were visibly homeless in 2017. People in the process of being evicted, tenants without a rental agreement, households in short-term emergency accommodation, etc., were not counted. In 2017, 3,605 persons were included in the social protection programmes for the homeless, co-funded by the MLFSAEO: 2,211 in the shelter and supported accommodation programmes, 832 in day centre programmes and 562 in eviction-prevention programmes (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, Table 6.1.5). In 2018, around 3,600 people were included in such programmes (MLFSAEO, 2018a).

MLFSAEO data on the homeless, published by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (SPIRS), do not include women and children in mothers' shelters and safe houses, since these programmes are classified as violence prevention. Nonetheless, these data are reported in Table A2 as well.

That it is truly impossible to determine the exact number of homeless people, is confirmed by the figure provided by the 'Brezdomni do ključa' association, which combines all organisations working with homeless persons. According to their estimates, there were just over 6,700 homeless people in Slovenia in 2016 (Lozej, 2017). It is also difficult to define who is homeless and who is not. In the 2013-14 survey conducted by the 'Kralji ulice' (Kings of the Street) Association among the users of services for homeless persons, a quarter of respondents answered that they were not homeless and that they had never been homeless (Dekleva, 2015).

1.3 Trends in homelessness and housing exclusion

The national social care programme for 2013-2020 (Resolution on the National Programme of Social Care 2013-2020, 2013) stated in a single sentence that, in recent years (that is, around 2010), the extent of homelessness in Slovenia had increased. The same trend was perceived by the MLFSAEO (MLFSAEO, 2015).

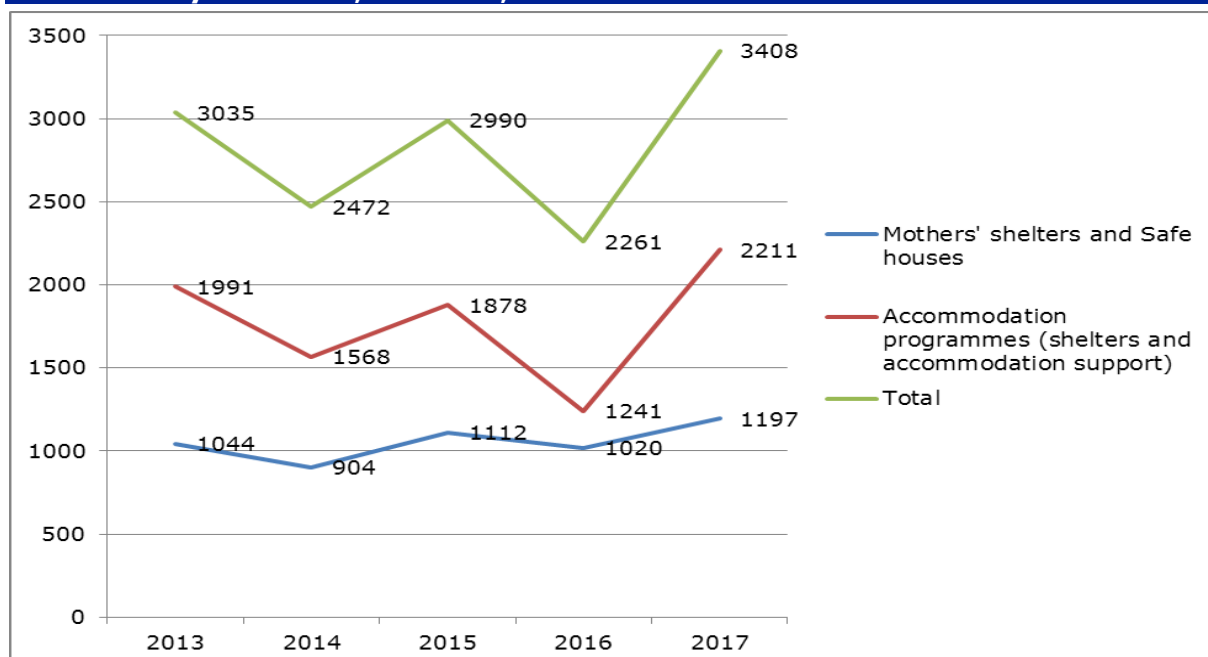
Due to the lack of data on other programmes, an overlap between accommodation programmes and day programmes, as well as an overlap between users of programmes offered by different providers,⁶ only the data on the homeless included in the accommodation programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO are included in Figure 1. These numbers refer to persons using accommodation programme services of any kind, and these services are not necessarily used by homeless people only. No clear trend is evident: increases in the number of users were followed by falls. The number of accommodated persons fell in 2014 and 2015, and increased in 2016 and 2017. It was 561 in 2013, 485 in 2014, 477 in 2015, 524 in 2016, and 648 in 2017 (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, p. 169), accounting for 25-42% of the total number of accommodation programme users.

⁵ Busch-Geertsema *et al.* (2014, p. 52) reported that there were 193 such persons in 2012.

⁶ Dekleva *et al.* (2010) pointed to these overlaps as drawbacks to counting the users of programmes for the homeless (where the user identification is not requested) in order to estimate the extent of homelessness. They also stressed that not all users of these programmes are homeless, that admission criteria exclude some homeless persons, and that the homeless who for various reasons do not participate in the programmes are not captured by such counting.

The number of women and children staying in mothers' shelters and safe houses, though fluctuating, showed a slow upward trend between 2013 and 2017 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of homeless people included in accommodation programmes co-funded by MLFSAEO, Slovenia, 2013-2017



Source: Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, Table 6.1.5.

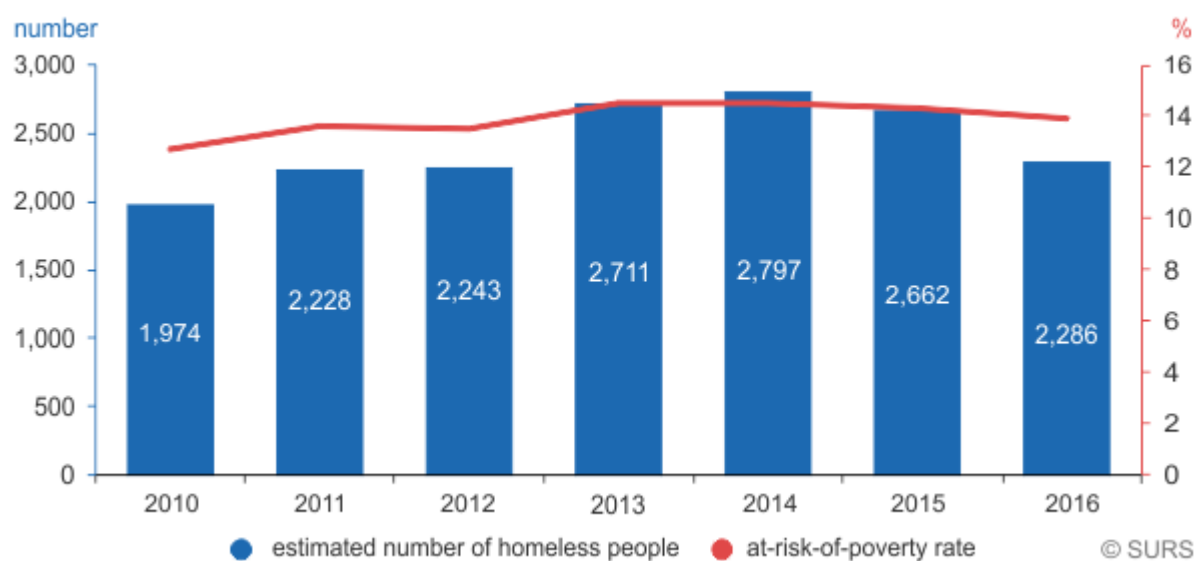
Note: The numbers refer to persons using accommodation programme services of any kind.

The 2017 data published by the SORS (Lozej, 2017) and presented in Figure 2 differ from those published by the SPIRS (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018) and presented in Figure 1. They combine the MLFSAEO and SORS data, the latter being related to permanent residence and housing. The number of homeless people estimated in this way increased between 2010 and 2014 and fell afterwards (in 2015 and 2016).

Due to the lack of comprehensive data and no clear trend in the available numbers for the homeless, one can only speculate about the main drivers of the developments in individual (partial) indicators of homelessness. An increase in the number of users of social protection programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO reflects the availability of programmes rather than the demand for them (the number of homeless persons and their needs), and it is not possible to evaluate the demand if one disposes of a very rough estimate of the number of homeless persons. For instance, an increase in users of accommodation programmes in 2017 may reflect a higher number of available beds (around 260 in 2013-2015, 283 in 2016 and 300 in 2017; Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, Table 6.1.5) rather than a higher number of homeless persons. An increase in the number of programmes is likely to make some invisible homeless people visible.

In the last decade or two, the housing market has been an increasingly important driver of homelessness due to the lack of social housing (see Section 2.2.1) and to a higher number of evictions (as reported by the media).

According to Lozej (2017), unsettled family and residential conditions, poverty, violence, mental problems, alcoholism and addictions are frequent reasons for homelessness. For some people, homelessness starts with a childhood spent in foster families, youth accommodation facilities and residential institutions. For others, homelessness is the result of family conflicts or abuse. Frequent reasons are mental problems, divorce or death of a close person. Before becoming homeless, a large proportion of homeless people lived in socially and materially adverse living conditions.

Figure 2: Number of homeless people estimated by SORS, Slovenia, 2010-2016

Source: Lozej, 2017, Chart 1.

Note: Although there is no clear correlation between the at-risk-of-poverty rate and the number of homeless persons, the data presented show that in 2010-2016 the at-risk-of-poverty rate and the estimated number of homeless persons grew and fell at roughly the same times (Lozej, 2017).

Dekleva and Razpotnik (2007) emphasise that the reasons for homelessness are complex and multifaceted. They found conflicts in the family, and insufficient opportunities that accompany the transition to independent life, as the most frequent circumstances (and probably also causes) of the first episodes of homelessness. The authors also note that, in the case of homeless people with alcohol addiction, it is hard to disentangle causes from consequences. It is also hard (or even impossible) to detect subjective reasons behind the objective ones, and *vice versa*. In their survey of 107 homeless people in Ljubljana, the majority (57%) confirmed financial problems as the reason for their homelessness. For around half, homelessness had been their own decision,⁷ while the other half (roughly) had experienced eviction or had been ousted from their home. Additional reasons were loss of a job (for 46%), breaking up with a partner (31%) and conflict with parents (29%).

Visible homelessness is increasing, especially in winter when homeless people seek shelter from the cold. Most of them are adult males, often with a variety of problems, no means of subsistence, and even lack a minimum living space (MLFSAEO, 2015).

1.4 The profile of the homeless population in Slovenia

Official data on the gender distribution or any other characteristic of homeless people – no matter how they are defined – are not available. In the surveys conducted between 2005 and 2014, the homeless people interviewed were mostly men (83%) and were aged 42 on average. Half of them had completed upper-secondary education and 42% elementary education. Just over half (54%) were single and had never married, while

⁷ Dekleva and Razpotnik (2007) argue that the personal decision to leave one's home may be the step taken just before an expected eviction. It may also be that someone who wishes to leave their home behaves in a way that will result in them being evicted or ousted.

29% were divorced. Almost half (44%) had children. Most (83%) had been employed in the past, with just over 12 years of service on average (Lozej, 2017).

Research conducted in Ljubljana in 2005 showed that 85% of the homeless were men and 15% women; the average age was 41; the majority were single and had never married (60%); 25% were divorced; 11% were married or living with a partner; and 4% were widowed. Just over half had no children. Almost all (97%) were Slovenian citizens, 2% had citizenship of another country and 1% were without citizenship. As many as 61% occasionally or regularly drank alcohol (21% daily) and 40% used drugs (22% daily). Additionally, almost a third reported that mental health problems were among their reasons for becoming homeless. Just under one quarter (24%) also reported the experience of hospitalisation in a psychiatric clinic. (Dekleva and Razpotnik, 2007)

According to the Kings of the Street Association, almost all users of their programmes are single. Most people who are currently homeless drink alcohol regularly, while around half of are alcohol addicts. Many have mental health problems.

There are no street children in Slovenia.⁸ Although the accommodation programmes for the homeless are not intended for people younger than 18, the accommodation co-funded by the MLFSAEO in 2017 was used by 14 such persons (out of the total of 2,211). In the prevention of evictions programmes, 280 out of 562 persons were younger than 18, since these programmes often deal with evictions of families (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, Table 3.4.4).

In 2011, families were described as an emerging presence in the homeless population in Slovenia, but reliable trend data were not available (Baptista *et al.*, 2017). Generally, families with children were reported as being at a substantially lower risk of becoming homeless than single people or couples without children, due to a comprehensive welfare system.

The structure of homelessness is changing (MLFSAEO, 2015). It is no longer confined to middle-aged men, but has spread to women and children (HRO, 2015). In recent years, Slovenia has seen an upward trend in the number of younger homeless people, homeless people with mental health problems and regular drug-users (MLFSAEO, 2015; MLFSAEO, 2017b); and also most recently in older homeless people, who need more support than younger ones.

⁸ According to the information provided by the Public Housing Fund of the city municipality of Ljubljana, they are not aware of any homeless child in the city. The MLFSAEO claims that there are no street children in Slovenia as a whole.

2 Relevant strategies and policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

2.1 National strategies

There is no homelessness strategy in Slovenia.⁹

The **national social care programme for 2013-2020** (Resolution on the National Programme of Social Care 2013-2020, 2013) only lists the kinds of programmes for the homeless that are available – actual facilities in 2013, and objectives for 2020. The objectives are to:

- increase the number of day centres with counselling services from 8 to 20 and to add preventive activities;
- increase the number of shelters from 14 (with 260 beds) to 18 (with 350 beds);
- provide for 150 persons within the framework of housing-support (Housing First) programmes;
- implement 10 programmes in the area of the organisation and implementation of assistance, support and self-help; and
- offer programmes in a higher number of administrative units in Slovenia.

The **national housing programme for 2015-2025** (Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015-2025, 2015) foresees the provision of housing units for the most socially excluded. The units would be awarded on a temporary basis to those who – for various reasons – have become, or are at risk of becoming, homeless. There was a shortfall of around 800 temporary housing units in 2015.

The urgent measures envisaged by the national housing programme include:

- the introduction of a new rent policy that would facilitate the maintenance of public rented housing, stimulate new investment in rented housing stock, and revise housing subsidies;
- the replacement of each public rented housing unit sold by at least one unit; and
- an increase in the housing stock to meet the needs of the most vulnerable population groups, and to adapt it in order to achieve a minimum financial burden for users.

There is an action plan for the implementation of the programme.

2.2 Funding mechanisms

The MLFSAEO has been co-funding verified¹⁰ social protection programmes for the homeless on a five- to seven-year basis after having co-funded them as development social protection programmes for three years on an annual basis. Municipalities finance complementary social protection programmes that are important for their particular local community. In the coming years, an extension of the shelter network is envisaged through co-operation between the MLFSAEO and local communities.

The programmes aimed at homeless people (only information for the programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO is available) acquired total funding of €2,864,384 in 2017. By far the biggest share was allocated to the **homeless accommodation programmes** (€2,123,894). Total MLFSAEO co-funding amounted to €1,322,800, which was more than

⁹ The Slovenian Network of Organisations Working with Homeless People presented their draft of the homelessness strategy in 2015 (HRO, 2015), although without tangible effects.

¹⁰ Verified by the Social Chamber of Slovenia; see: <https://www.szslo.si/verifikacija> (accessed 3 May 2019).

the year before by around €159,000. According to the information provided by the MLFSAEO, its co-funding will increase to €1,469,704 in 2019.

MLFSAEO resources accounted for 46.2% of all funds allocated to the programmes for the homeless co-funded by it in 2017 (54.7% if violence-prevention programmes providing accommodation are also included). They are mostly intended for paying the professional staff and covering materials costs. Local communities (municipalities) contributed almost 30% (€840,342), while programme users and members of organisations conducting programmes (through membership) contributed 9.5% (€273,491) of all acquired funds. Other providers of finance were the Employment Service of Slovenia (5.2%), the Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia (2.4%), donors (1.9%), other public sources (4.1%) and other non-public sources (1.2%). (Smolej Jež *et al.*, 2018, pp. 79-82; own calculations)

Funding by groups of programmes is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Financing sources of social protection programmes for the homeless, Slovenia, 2017, EUR

Programme	Total funds (EUR)	MLFSAEO (EUR)	Municipalities (EUR)	Employment Service of Slovenia (EUR)	FIHO (EUR)	Users and membership (EUR)	Donors (EUR)	Other public sources (EUR)	Other non-public sources (EUR)	Evaluated voluntary work (EUR)
Accommodation support	387,792.70	176,100.00	149,020.80	12,378.70	2,520.90	39,508.60	56.40	7,586.00	621.30	0
Shelters	1,736,101.80	789,261.40	556,106.20	53,851.00	44,536.70	179,890.70	33,659.90	49,713.70	29,082.20	0
Day programmes	603,371.20	284,838.90	97,456.70	83,936.80	21,427.40	54,092.30	19,061.70	34,472.20	3,784.30	4,301.00
Eviction prevention	137,118.30	72,600.00	37,758.40	0	0	0	1,690.00	25,070.00	0	0
Mothers' shelters, safe houses, refugees and crisis centres ¹¹	3,539,046.90	2,178,059.30	835,846.20	51,412.80	129,204.90	137,015.40	88,582.90	63,051.00	55,874.60	0
TOTAL	6,403,430.90	3,500,859.60	1,676,188.30	201,579.30	197,689.90	410,507.00	143,050.90	179,892.90	89,362.40	4,301.00

Sources: Smolej Jež et al., 2018, Table 3.4.2; own calculations.

Note: Only the programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO are included.

* FIHO is the Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia.

'Users and membership' corresponds to programme users and members of organisations conducting programmes (through membership).

¹¹ Preventive and counselling (included telephone counselling) violence-prevention programmes are not included.

Table 2: Financing sources of social protection programmes for the homeless, Slovenia, 2017, %

Programme	Total funds	MLFSAEO	Municipalities	Employment Service of Slovenia	FIHO*	Users and membership	Donors	Other public sources	Other non-public sources	Evaluated voluntary work
Accommodation support	100	45.4	38.4	3.2	0.7	10.2	0.0	2.0	0.2	0.0
Shelters	100	45.5	32.0	3.1	2.6	10.4	1.9	2.9	1.7	0.0
Day programmes	100	47.2	16.2	13.9	3.6	9.0	3.2	5.7	0.6	0.7
Eviction prevention	100	52.9	27.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	18.3	0.0	0.0
Mothers' shelters, safe houses, refuges and crisis centres	100	61.5	23.6	1.5	3.6	3.9	2.5	1.8	1.6	0.0
TOTAL	100	54.7	26.2	3.1	3.1	6.4	2.2	2.8	1.4	0.1

Sources: Smolej Jež et al., 2018, Table 3.4.2.; own calculations.

Note: Only programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO are included.

* See Table 1.

2.2.1 Capital expenditure

Social housing is in short supply in Slovenia. In March 2017 there was a shortage of some 9,100 housing units (Boštale, 2018). The latest evaluation by the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia states that 9,200 extra units were needed, 4,200 of them in Ljubljana (Pušnik, 2019). Slovenia only allocates around 0.04% of GDP to housing, which is a hundred times less than the EU average (Zabukovec, 2016). Central and local authorities have no interest in the construction of non-profit housing because non-profit rents are fixed by administrative procedure, have eroded in real terms (they have not changed since 2003) and do not cover the maintenance costs¹² (MISP, 2014: 8). Local communities have even been selling worn-out non-profit housing units in order to raise funds to maintain the rest of the stock, thus exacerbating the shortage (Piano, 2017).

By 2021, the Housing Fund is planning to build 607 non-profit apartments in Ljubljana and 400 in Maribor. A further 437 apartments are planned for Maribor between 2023 and 2025 (Stergar, 2019).

In the capital city, Ljubljana, only 1 in 10 applicants is granted non-profit housing. Public calls for applications are published biennially. Around a third of those selected in 2014 were still waiting to be awarded a non-profit housing unit in 2017 (Piano, 2017); some will be able to move this year, and the last ones by the end of 2020 (Pušnik, 2019)¹³. The latest public call was published in April 2019; in Ljubljana and Vrhnika, 150 apartments are expected to be ready for use by the end of 2020 (STA, 2019). By 2024, the Public Housing Fund of the city municipality of Ljubljana will build 1,451 non-profit apartments. They evaluate that, at the current pace (around 100 new apartments per year), 40 years would be needed to meet the current demand for non-profit housing. In the light of that, additional financial sources should be committed in order to improve the supply (Pušnik, 2019).

The 2019 business and financial plan of the Maribor Public Inter-Municipality Housing Fund has been in the process of adoption by the founding municipalities. It foresees the building of 65 apartments and the renovation of a house to create four housing units.¹⁴

The Human Rights Ombudsman (HRO, 2016, p. 264) stated that there had been a failure to implement its recommendation to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning that local communities be obliged, under the Housing Act, to provide a certain number of adequate housing units (according to the population size) and to publish calls for the allocation of non-profit housing. This recommendation is linked to the adoption of amendments to the Housing Act pursuant to the national housing programme 2015-2025. The target for Slovenia's Housing Fund, to build 5,000 public housing units in the years 2020-2025, will only be achieved with a shift in rent policy from non-profit rents to rents that cover costs (including maintenance and reconstruction). The affordability of such housing would be achieved by a housing supplement to be introduced by the expected amendments to the Housing Act (Križnik, 2018).

2.2.2 Support for people's access to housing

Accommodation support

Since 2012, The Kings of the Street Association has been co-operating with the Public Housing Fund of the city municipality of Ljubljana (and now also with the one for Maribor) in implementing a Swiss long-term model for combating housing exclusion. The

¹² The study quoted by Križnik (2015) showed that the non-profit rent should be increased by 47% in order to cover the costs. In Ljubljana, the costs-based rent amounts to €6-7 per m², while the non-profit rent amounts to €3-4 (Pušnik, 2019).

¹³ In the municipality of Velenje, only 26 of 365 applicants have been awarded non-profit housing since 2018 (B., 2019).

¹⁴ This information was kindly provided by the Maribor Public Inter-Municipality Housing Fund upon request.

public housing funds provide accommodation units, while the association's professional workers provide field psycho-social support aimed at reducing the risk of people losing their existing accommodation.¹⁵ Information on the funding of all verified accommodation support programmes is provided in Tables 1 and 2. Work with potentially homeless people and advocacy are mostly co-funded by the MLFSAEO and local communities. Volunteers are engaged along with employed staff.¹⁶

Housing benefits are financed from the central government budget. They are granted to individuals or families whose total income does not exceed the sum of 1.3 times their respective minimum income (without activity supplements) and the (estimated) non-profit rent. The amount of benefit depends on the size of the apartment and the individual's or family's income. The housing benefit is equal to the difference between the income threshold for the individual/household and their income, but must not exceed 80% of the respective non-profit rent (MLFSAEO, 2019c).

There is a good provision in Slovenia that compensates for the shortage of non-profit housing. Means-tested rent subsidies covering the difference between the market (for-profit) rent and non-profit rent are available to those who are entitled to non-profit housing but have to rent at market prices. This subsidy is 50% financed by the municipality of the tenant's permanent residence and 50% by the central government budget (Housing Act, 2003, Article 121b). These tenants are also entitled to a subsidised non-profit rent (housing subsidy). This means that, for beneficiaries renting at market prices, the housing benefit consists of a subsidised non-profit rent and the difference between the market and non-profit rent.

Eviction prevention

Two eviction-prevention programmes (in Ljubljana and Maribor) are mainly financed by the MLFSAEO and the municipalities. Details are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

2.2.3 Support for non-housing solutions

Shelters for the homeless are mostly co-funded by the MLFSAEO and municipalities, as well as users and members of programme providers. Some financial support for emergency accommodation provided by municipalities and non-government organisations (NGOs) comes from the central government budget. For instance, it co-funded 13 services in 2016 (Pleace *et al.*, 2018, p. 31). Volunteers are engaged along with employed staff, but their work has not been evaluated in Tables 1 and 2 where the funding details are presented.

The Ministry of Health co-funds programmes of assistance, counselling and care for people without compulsory health insurance (which includes some homeless people) in *pro bono* dispensaries. The social worker in such dispensaries is financed by the MLFSAEO. The Ministry of the Interior is (co-)funding accommodation and other programmes for migrants and refugees.

A total of €3,539,046 was allocated to women's shelter or refuge accommodation (i.e., mothers' shelters, safe houses, refuges and crisis centres) that were co-funded by the MLFSAEO in 2017 (Table 1). MLFSAEO co-funding amounted to €2,178,059, which was 61.5% of all funds allocated to these programmes in 2017. Local communities (municipalities) contributed 23.6%, programme users and members of organisations conducting programmes (through membership) 3.9%, and the Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia 3.6%. Other sources were donors (2.5%), the Employment Service of Slovenia (1.5%), other public sources (1.8%) and other non-public sources (1.6%) (Table 2).

¹⁵ See: <http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/nastanitev> (accessed 19 April 2019).

¹⁶ See, for instance: <http://mozaik-drustvo.si/#program1> (accessed 19 April 2019).

2.3 EU funding

Within the framework of the operational programme for implementing EU cohesion policy in the period 2014-2020, the Employment Service of Slovenia receives EU co-funding for active labour market policies from the **European Social Fund (ESF)**.¹⁷ The homeless are indirectly included as long-term unemployed persons. Under the current financial arrangements, social activation programmes are also co-funded.¹⁸ The homeless – as cash social assistance beneficiaries, long-term unemployed and socially excluded persons – belong to the focus group of these programmes.

The ESF co-funds experimental social protection programmes (currently, there is no such programme for the homeless).

The Kings of the Street Association, which works with and for the homeless, received ESF co-funding for the establishment, in 2010, of a second-hand shop as a social enterprise.¹⁹

The Kings of the Street Association developed the accommodation support programme in 2008-09 within the framework of the pilot project co-funded by the **EEA²⁰ Financial Mechanism** and the **Norwegian Financial Mechanism**.

The **European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived** has allocated food and funds to the most deprived in Slovenia. In 2017, material aid was granted to 2,545 homeless persons, both those included in the social protection programmes (shelters, day centres, mother's shelters, safe houses, reception therapeutical centres for addicts, etc.) and those not included. Free medical doctor's aid to the homeless was an accompanying measure (MLFSAEO, 2018b).

In the implementation plan of the national social care programme for 2017-2018, no co-funding from EU funds was anticipated for social protection programmes for the homeless (MLFSAEO, 2017a, p. 35).

2.4 Implementation and monitoring of strategies

Following the adoption of the **national social care programme for 2013-2020** (Resolution on the National Programme of Social Care 2013-2020, 2013), national and regional implementation plans were adopted. The national implementation plan (MLFSAEO, 2017a) was drafted by a national coordination group appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. It consisted of representatives of social protection programme providers (NGOs and associations of providers of public services in the field of social protection), the National Council of Disability Organisations, programme users and local communities, as well as ministries and researchers (SPIRS and Faculty of Social Work). Regional implementation plans were adopted for the years 2014-2016 and 2017-2020. Regional coordination groups consisted of representatives of local communities, public providers in the field of social protection (centres for social work, old people's homes, etc.), NGOs, users and regional development agencies.²¹ The coordination groups are also in charge of following up the national programme's implementation.

¹⁷ See: https://www.ess.gov.si/storitve/evropski_socialni_sklad (accessed 29 April 2019).

¹⁸ See: http://mddsz.arhiv-spletisc.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/sociala/programi_socialne_aktivacije/javni_razpisi_za_programe_socialne_aktivacije/ (accessed 4 September 2019).

¹⁹ See: <http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/stara-roba-nova-raba> and http://www.robaraba.si/o_nas (accessed 29 April 2019).

²⁰ European Economic Area.

²¹ See, for instance: <http://www.bsc-kranj.si/novice/regijski-izvedbeni-nacrt-na-podrocju-socialnega-varstva-2017-2020-za-gorenjsko-regijo> (accessed 29 April 2019).

The majority of social protection programmes are implemented on the basis of annual public calls published by the MLFSAEO.

SPIRS is in charge of ongoing monitoring of the national programme's implementation, including identification of emerging social issues and early warning. The first monitoring report was published in December 2015, the second in December 2016 (Smolej Jež, Trbanc and Dremelj, 2016) and the latest one in December 2017 (Smolej Jež and Trbanc, 2017).²² The national coordination group discusses these reports annually. Progress in realising the national programme's goals is shown in Table 3. The number of shelters and accommodation support programmes increased in the years 2013-2016, but was still far off the 2020 goal, regarding both the number of programmes and the number of beds. There was no progress in the number of day centres for the homeless. An eviction-protection programme was implemented, which has not been set as a goal. The progress achieved in the violence-prevention programmes suggests that the 2020 goals may be achieved.²³

Table 3: Realisation of the goals of the national social care programme for 2013-2020; social protection programmes for the homeless in Slovenia

	Number of programmes	Number of beds	Number of programmes	Number of beds	Number of programmes	Number of beds
	Situation in 2013		Situation in 2016		2020 goal	
Shelters for the homeless	10	238	13	257	18	350
Accommodation support	1	23	*	26	*	150
Day centres	4	-	4	-	20	-
Eviction prevention			1			
Mothers' shelters	7	152	8	179	10	200
Safe houses	14	257	13	258	18	280
Crisis centres	**	16	3	58	2	40

Source: Smolej Jež and Trbanc, 2017, Tables 3 and 6.

* Included under shelters.

** Included under safe houses.

Smolej Jež *et al.* (2018) provided information for the year 2017. The only differences worth mentioning in respect of 2016 are: 1) there were 4 programmes of accommodation support (besides 12 shelters) with 51 beds; and 2) the number of day centres increased to 6. According to the information provided by the MLFSAEO, in mid-2019 around 250 beds are available in shelters for the homeless and 70 in accommodation support.

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning reports to the Slovenian government each year on the implementation of activities set out in the national housing programme 2015-2025. In the most recent report (for 2018) (MESP, 2019) there is information on a pilot project for supporting and assisting families who were forcibly evicted. The pilot project has been implemented since 2016 (running until 1 July 2019) and co-ordinated by the MLFSAEO. The project facilitates free use of 11 dwellings in 7 Slovenian local communities by evicted persons. Centres for social work have, in

²² All reports are available at: <https://www.irssv.si/index.php/raz-porocila/socialne-zadeve#spremljanje-zakonodaje-in-strateških-dokumentov> (accessed 29 April 2019).

²³ The follow-up is not possible for the number of safe houses since their number in 2013 was not reported.

cooperation with local actors, taken effective action in the case of a large proportion of the announced evictions. In cases where local communities and other stakeholders failed to provide appropriate solutions, the social work centres prepared proposals for temporary accommodation within the framework of this pilot project. All dwellings were used during the project; at the end of 2018, 8 dwellings were occupied.

The project is now focusing on proposals for systemic changes and other measures in the field of evictions. A set of concrete proposals has been developed using the information, observations and experience acquired by the pilot project. Better and enhanced cooperation between stakeholders will also be ensured after the end of the pilot project through the cooperation protocol. The implementation of the pilot project will be evaluated by the SPIRS (MESP, 2019, pp. 8-9).

2.5 Indicators used to monitor homelessness and housing exclusion

The **national social care programme for 2013-2020** (Resolution on the National Programme of Social Care 2013-2020, 2013) does not include any of the EU indicators on housing.

Indicators to monitor the implementation of the **national housing programme 2015-2025** (Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015-2025, 2015) include only one of the EU indicators: overcrowding. There are two indicators that are similar to the EU housing indicators: 1) the share of household expenditure going on rent, water and energy (similar to the EU indicator 'housing cost overburden rate'); and 2) the share of the total population living in a dwelling with at least one of the housing deprivation measures: a leaking roof; damp walls, floors or foundations; and rot in window frames or floors (similar to the EU 'housing deprivation indicator').

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

3.1 Main types of support services and main service providers

According to Pleace *et al.* (2018, p. 11), by incorporating responses to homelessness into mainstream social policy, rather than maintaining an extensive homelessness sector, Slovenia has coordinated more strategic responses to homelessness. Alongside the stable subsidising of multi-annual programmes (12 in 2019), to which the main share of funds is allocated, the MLFSAEO also subsidises a number of development programmes based on annual public tenders (MLFSAEO, 2019a). There are 7 developmental social welfare programmes currently subsidised by the MLFSAEO that include reception centres and shelters for homeless people. NGOs often provide the initiative for the provision of certain necessary services. Due to their strong civil society links, they can adequately articulate the needs of individuals and population groups.

In the spring of 2019, 18 programmes for the homeless were running. They include various kinds of support, but the main ones are housing support, fieldwork (street outreach services), day centres, counselling, and psycho-social support and assistance (MLFSAEO, 2019b). There are also 8 mothers' shelters programmes, 12 safe houses and 3 crisis centres, all of which belong to the network of violence-prevention programmes.²⁴

Primary **prevention** is relatively well developed, effective and efficient. The Social Assistance Benefits Act (2010) provides cash social assistance and similar benefits, including the option of extraordinary cash social assistance (granted up to twice a year). There is also a means-tested housing benefit. Cash and in-kind assistance are also provided to vulnerable people by NGOs. Based on the Social Assistance Act (1992), first (primary) social aid is provided,²⁵ along with personal aid, assistance to families, and institutional services to those in distress. All this reduces the risk of families becoming homeless.

Secondary prevention focuses on support to families at high risk of homelessness, particularly those about to be evicted. The Kings of the Street Association started to develop an accommodation support programme in 2008. They borrowed the Norwegian model, adapted it to the Slovenian situation and applied it in a pilot project co-funded by the MLFSAEO, the city municipality of Ljubljana and the Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia. The project has developed into a verified social protection programme. Two such programmes are currently running: in Ljubljana and Maribor (also see Section 2.2.2). The two municipal housing funds alert the NGO working with homeless people (the Kings of the Street Association) to situations where tenants are not paying bills or are misusing their housing; the NGO then approaches those people/families and works with them twice a week in order to empower them to keep their current accommodation. The 'Mozaik', Social Inclusion Association is providing 'assistance at the door', which is fieldwork (street outreach services) with potentially homeless people, and advocacy²⁶ (MLFSAEO, 2019b).

²⁴ See: http://mddsz.arhiv-spletisc.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/sociala/socialnovarstveni_programi/varne_hise/index.html (accessed 4 September 2019).

²⁵ 'Primary social aid is aimed at recognition and definition of social needs, evaluation of possible solutions and informing the individual of existing networks of support services, including emergency accommodation' (Pleace *et al.*, 2018, p. 62).

²⁶ See <http://mozaik-drustvo.si/#program1> (accessed 19 April 2019).

Tertiary prevention includes measures designed to minimise the duration of homelessness, such as systems for rapid rehousing. In larger cities, emergency dwellings are used for people evicted from social dwellings in order to prevent homelessness. However, long waiting lists are common due to undersupply (Baptista *et al.*, 2017). Stays in emergency accommodation can be prolonged as there are challenges in finding housing. A pilot project started in 2016, focused on providing housing units intended for individuals and families who faced forced eviction (MESP, 2017, pp. 8-9). According to the information provided by the Public Housing Fund of the city municipality of Ljubljana, they solve the problem of families with (acute) severe circumstances by allocating housing units without public calls. These units are usually small units of low quality (often in basements or in attics). Families can stay there for a fixed time period of time. In addition, these housing units are in short supply.

Emergency/temporary accommodation (shelters and refuges) is provided by centres for social work, NGOs (including the Red Cross, Caritas and other associations) and public institutes. Slovenia does not have a clear distinction between emergency and temporary accommodation (Pleace *et al.*, 2018, p. 31).²⁷ Some shelters are only available overnight, while the majority have a day centre too. The shelters provide basic services, such as meals and hygiene maintenance (showers, clean clothes and footwear, clothes washing, etc.).

Slovenia also has refuge services for women (and their children) at risk of domestic violence (mothers' shelters, safe houses, refuges and crisis centres). These women – who are in need of professional assistance and support by a wider community – may stay in the mothers' shelter for up to a year (up 18 months if necessary). Activities are organised for mothers and children to enable them to progress towards independent living outside the mothers' shelter as quickly as possible

For people with mental health problems and addictions, there is temporary accommodation available which also supports homeless people with these characteristics.

Non-residential services for homeless people include day programmes offering basic and integration support, street outreach services (fieldwork), and healthcare support. Providers are often the same as those running shelters. Day centres provide space for socialisation, rest, meals/clothes/footwear, information, counselling and advocacy; some offer psycho-social support as well. Some provide basic healthcare, or organise workshops, lectures and courses. Most day centres offer various activities aimed at re-insertion into the labour market or just the resolution of an acute socio-economic situation (see Annex 2). The Kings of the Street Association stresses the need to involve the homeless in activities performed by an average citizen: they take them to a zoo or theatre, and organise a day of skiing for them every year. Around half of the programmes for the homeless include street outreach services (see Annex 2). One NGO combines fieldwork with the distribution of a warm dinner.²⁸

Healthcare professionals provide assistance, counselling and care to people without compulsory health insurance, through fieldwork and work in day care centres for the homeless. In this way they reach the population excluded from the public health system. They also provide healthcare in *pro bono* dispensaries for those without health insurance. Several dozen medical doctors volunteer there. People donate medicine to them that they no longer need. A social worker is also available there.

²⁷ A distinction is made in Slovenia between 'open' emergency accommodation with free direct access, where users only stay the night, and 'closed' emergency accommodation where the user pays and can also stay for the day. 'The length of stays permitted varies, which tends to reduce the distinction between emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation' (Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA, 2019, p. 13).

²⁸ While distributing warm dinners, volunteers talk to the homeless, show interest in them and learn about their needs and distress, encourage them to seek a more pleasant and responsible lifestyle, and help them solve personal problems (<http://www.brezdomec.si/content/delo-z-brezdomci-v-novi-gorici.html>, 19 April 2019).

Housing First services: Slovenia does not have much provision of housing-focused support (Housing First and housing-led services) and has been classified as the country with medium intensity of non-housing focused support (Baptista *et al.*, 2017, pp. 50-51). Current providers of Housing First services are two NGOs (see Annex 2), a centre for social work, the Red Cross, Caritas and a public institute. However, accommodation support with comprehensive assistance to the homeless and people experiencing housing exclusion is gaining in importance and will be stressed in the following years. The focus group will be families with children who are facing multiple disadvantages, so that assisting them would mean long-term prevention in the area of social exclusion and homelessness.

In the last five years (since 2014), there have been no innovations in the provision of homelessness services.

3.2 The role of service providers

Within the general legal framework, the responsibility for social protection services remains with the MLFSAEO, which each year publishes calls for co-funding of such services. There is a separate call for the programmes for homeless people.

The role of centres for social work (and other public bodies) in providing services and benefits is specified in the Social Assistance Act (1992) and the Social Assistance Benefits Act (2010), but there is no direct requirement to provide services for the homeless population as a whole. The Social Assistance Act (1992) regulates social services (such as first (primary) social aid, personal aid, assistance to families and institutional services) in general, and these services also can assist homeless people. Centres for social work act as a one-stop shop for social benefits (cash social assistance, extraordinary cash social assistance, child allowance, income supplement, national scholarship, care allowance, death grant and funeral grant) and subsidies (early childhood education and care subsidy, school meals subsidy and rent subsidy), as well as other rights held by cash social assistance beneficiaries (free mandatory health insurance, free health services that are not paid for through mandatory health insurance, and exemption from (full) payment of social assistance services) (Social Assistance Benefits Act, 2010; Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act, 2010). Centres for social work also co-operate with employment offices in the social activation of the long-term unemployed, based on individualised agreements on actively addressing the social problems of the unemployed with specified personal circumstances. They provide information and counselling, and some also provide psycho-social support. Some centres for social work run shelters for the homeless, and some also provide day care or only meals.

The programmes of private providers (the Red Cross, Caritas, other associations and NGOs, or private institutions) complement those provided by public entities and, if verified, also have the status of public programmes. It is usually the (future) private providers (and not the responsible Ministry) that take the initiative for programmes. Providers are also in charge of planning and coordination, as well as fundraising, since the MLFSAEO covers up to 80% of verified programme costs. Apart from providing services, they perform internal monitoring and evaluation. They report on the number of users in each programme for homeless people, engaged staff, funding, etc., to the MLFSAEO/SPIRS.

Along with MLFSAEO co-funding, social services for the homeless are co-funded by: municipalities (local communities), the Ministry of Health, the central government budget, other interested entities (such as the Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia), donors, users and the providers' members (see Section 2.2).

Slovenian Philanthropy (an NGO) is training volunteers, including those working with the homeless.

3.3 Effectiveness of existing social services

The existing services are effective in preventing and alleviating HHE (including prevention of evictions and rapid rehousing support) – at least as regards programmes co-funded by the MLFSAEO – but limited by the available resources. It is, however, also true that the extent of MLFSAEO co-funding to some extent depends on the number and ambitions of the programmes responding to the annual calls.

The same applies to the provision of access to permanent accommodation. The established cooperation between two municipal public housing funds and the Kings of the Street NGO relatively successfully prevents homelessness among tenants in the non-profit housing sector by preventing problems escalating into potential evictions. Housing First services have been slowly extended, but they face the same problem as low-income people in general: the shortage of non-profit housing (see Section 2.2.1). The current waiting time for a housing unit is around four years. This leads to the situation where dwellings for accommodation support and social housing are rented at market prices.²⁹ Adequate accommodation for people with physical disabilities is a problem. The same applies to homeless women, whose number has been increasing: separate rooms for women are available in only one shelter in Slovenia, while housing units are rarely available in accommodation support programmes. There is a lack of housing units suitable for families, resulting in children being placed into foster care and the probability that these families will never again live together (HRO, 2015).

Wolf *et al.* (2016) report on Slovenian research indicating that most homeless people were able to access healthcare services. This is due to the rights resulting from the status of a cash social assistance beneficiary (free mandatory health insurance) and free (*pro bono*) services outside the mandatory insurance scheme (see Section 3.2).

Satisfactory social protection of homeless people is to a great extent the result of a well developed general social protection system in Slovenia. Formal, mainstream social services are part of the response to homelessness, which means that – although the services focused on the homeless are of low intensity and not supported by extensive funds – there are other services, including those directly provided by the state, that homeless people can access (Pleace *et al.*, 2018). If they fulfil the conditions for cash social assistance (permanent residence in Slovenia; participation in the programmes for the homeless; work, job search or at least inclusion in a social activation programme), homeless people are granted a number of social benefits, subsidies and free services. The Slovenian social protection system (welfare benefits and services) and the reliability of extensive MLFSAEO co-funding of service provision are the main **systemic causes enhancing effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness**.

Existing services provide comprehensive and flexible support according to people's support needs (for illustration, see Annex 2). Homeless people are also encouraged to participate in programmes organised for other focus groups if they also belong to them: violence-prevention programmes, drug or alcohol addiction programmes, or programmes for people with mental health problems.

Programmes for homeless people are concentrated in urban settlements. According to the president of the Kings of the Street Association, since shelters and three meals per day are offered in urban settlements, nobody should need to sleep on the street or be hungry. Shelters and day centres provide the homeless with many other services in order to meet their basic needs, give them information, and support their socialisation. Providing support to persons who – for various reasons, such as physical disability, illness or transportation costs – cannot come to places where services for the homeless

²⁹ If the person is on the waiting list for social housing, the difference between the market and non-profit rent is covered from public sources (see Section 2.2.2).

are offered, is a challenge. In non-urban settlements, people at risk of housing exclusion are usually taken care of by other people in particular local communities.

The implementation plan of the national social care programme for 2017-2018 (MLFSAEO, 2017a, p. 35) stated that some of the existing types of programmes (programmes of accommodation support for the homeless as well as residentially excluded and evicted families) would need to be strengthened.

Höfler and Bojnec (2013) evaluated the situation of the homeless in Slovenia as adequate as regards the meeting of their basic needs (such as accommodation, nutrition and clothes), but not satisfactory as regards the prevention of homelessness. The authors were concerned about the extent and effectiveness of the combat against homelessness, against the background of the financial and economic crisis, a lack of adequately educated and trained staff/volunteers and a low level of political interest in this issue.

The main **systemic causes limiting effective and sustainable ways out of homelessness** are housing supply and housing affordability. In 2015, over 81% of dwellings were owner-occupied and only 8% rented (the rest were dwellings in other types of ownership) (SI-Stat Database, 2019). In the last decade, investors have built mainly above-standard housing while many housing owners joined Airbnb rental, which further aggravated the housing market situation for low-income tenants, in terms of both the availability and the affordability of housing. The housing funds lack financial resources and incentives, so a particular funding source would be needed.

3.4 Main weaknesses/gaps and priorities for improvement in Slovenia

Weaknesses/gaps:

- a huge shortage of non-profit housing;
- difficulty in estimating the number of homeless people, due to overlaps between programme users, the possibility of people using some programmes anonymously, and also the fact that some providers of programmes for the homeless do not report on their clients; and
- a lack of surveys or other sources providing information on the characteristics of the homeless population.

Priorities for improvement:

- a particular funding source for non-profit housing should be established;
- a legal obligation should be set (for instance, in the Housing Act) for local communities to provide a certain number (according to the population size) of adequate housing units and regularly publish calls for the allocation of non-profit housing;
- a system of unique recording of users, which would allow for better identification and tracking through the system – at least for those programmes where users are not allowed to remain anonymous – should be introduced (Dekleva *et al.*, 2010); and
- surveys should be financed to evaluate the extent of homelessness in Slovenia, the characteristics of homeless people and their need for support.

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Annex 1

Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Slovenia

Operational category		Living situation		Definition	Defined as homeless in Slovenia
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		Yes
		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
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	No
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing ³⁰	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	Yes
		10	Non-conventional buildings		Yes
		11	Temporary structures		Yes
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

Sources: Busch-Geertsema et al., 2014, Table 3.2; Baptista et al., 2017, p. 61; informal information by the MLFSAEO.

³⁰ In practice, people residing in poor housing without electricity and water, or even in emergency facilities, barracks and woodsheds, are not recorded as homeless. They usually come to a shelter when they are severely ill (Rak, 2017).

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

Operational category		Living situation		Most recent number	Period covered	Source
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	No data ³¹		
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	499 (+45) ³² ³³	2017	Smolej Jež <i>et al.</i> , 2018, Table 3.4.4
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	193 ³⁵	2012	Busch-Geertsema <i>et al.</i> , 2014, p. 52
		4	Temporary accommodation ³⁴	No data		
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	104 ³⁶	2017	Smolej Jež <i>et al.</i> , 2018, Table 3.4.4
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	1,197	2017	Smolej Jež <i>et al.</i> , 2018, Table 3.1.4
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	No data		
		8	Penal institutions	No data		
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	No data		
		10	Non-conventional buildings	No data		
		11	Temporary structures	No data		
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		

³¹ The MLFSAEO and NGOs estimate that the number is very small (two persons are currently visible as rough sleepers in Ljubljana), due to the availability of shelters and other social protection programmes for the homeless. Rough sleepers are those homeless people who do not accept the shelters' rules (for instance, drugs, alcohol and smoking are forbidden; taking showers is obligatory). Around 20-30 young drug addicts who left their families gather daily at a certain place in Ljubljana, but find overnight refuge in abandoned housing (most probably).

³² It is not clear how many of 45 were in the shelter and how many were in transitional supported accommodation.

³³ In addition to these 499 (+45) staying in shelters overnight, there were 938 others visiting day centres, 55 using reception centre services and 381 using other services. In total, 1,918 people were using the shelters' services.

³⁴ This living situation might be included in transitional supported accommodation in 2017.

³⁵ This living situation might be included in transitional supported accommodation in 2017.

³⁶ In addition to these 104, some of the 45 added to those staying in shelters may belong to this group. There were also 189 people using accommodation support services other than accommodation itself.

Annex 2: Examples of services for the homeless

The Kings of the Street Association describes **professionally supported housing** (i.e., setting up new housing options and preparing people for moving from the street to independent living) in the following way. The association rents an apartment for long-term homeless people, who stay there for a limited period and actively participate in other association activities. The purpose is for the homeless to improve their living situation with professional assistance, to a highest possible extent achieve the goals set by themselves, and afterwards become independent regarding accommodation and able to manage their lives (<http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/nastanitev>, 19 April 2019).

Accommodation support is intended for people who have found safe accommodation (such as a shelter), but are at risk of losing it or not being able to remain living there (in for-profit or non-profit rented housing, urgent accommodation units, temporary shelters/refuges, etc.) in a satisfactory way. The basic aim is to prevent homeless people losing the accommodation that they have found themselves. Forms and methods of professional support are focused on the prevention of homelessness, strengthening competences and autonomy, help for self-help, support in inclusion into the local community, enhancing the accessibility of rights, and increasing the quality of housing, as well as support in daily life and challenging situations (<http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/nastanitev>, 19 April 2019).

The **day centre** meets homeless people's need for a space where they can: stay during the day; receive information, advocacy and assistance in arranging their social status (related to personal documents, cash social assistance, registration of permanent residence, health insurance, legal issues, job search, accommodation, etc.); acquire skills needed for inclusion in social life; and get support in setting and achieving more demanding objectives. The programme stimulates homeless people to become active and co-operate in planning the assistance and self-help. The day centre's activities are open to all adult homeless people and other visitors who accept the rules. In the day centre, visitors can warm up, chat, have breakfast, talk to professional workers and volunteers, play parlour games, read newspapers and books, use personal computers/internet/telephones, get information, or change into donated clothes and footwear. From time to time, donated goods (such as cosmetics, food and pet food) and humanitarian aid is distributed. Safe storage of personal property and money is also available. The newspaper 'Kings of the Street' is distributed and articles written in the day centre. Workshops and lectures are organised (<http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/dnevni-center>, 19 April 2019).

Morning activities (8-11 a.m.) in the day centre, run by volunteers of the St. Vincent de Paul Association, include breakfast, cooking and creative workshops, working and cleaning-up activities, and playing parlour games. Afternoon (3-8 p.m.) activities are the distribution of clothes and footwear, personal hygiene, washing clothes and basic healthcare. In the evening, the homeless participate in cooking dinner, and then they watch TV or movies. In cases of distress or problems, they can discuss them and look for adequate solutions. The staff assist the homeless in arranging permanent accommodation or health insurance, as well as in cases of lost or stolen documents and accommodation or financial distress. They support them during addiction treatment, etc. (<http://www.brezdomec.si/node/20>, 19 April 2019).

Fieldwork (street outreach services) is intended for persons and groups who: a) cannot be reached by regular services; b) do not have contacts with institutions; c) are excluded from formal and informal networks; or d) have alcohol and drug addiction. Two kinds of fieldwork are performed: 1) in the streets where the homeless stay (providing information about the 'Kings of the Street' newspaper and association, and other institutions and organisations that assist the homeless; accompanying homeless people as they apply for personal documents, for cash social assistance or first (primary) social aid; counselling; conversation and support; looking for newspaper sellers and article

writers; various cleaning activities); and 2) in/with institutions and organisations dealing with the homeless (<http://www.kraljiulice.org/kaj-delamo/terensko-delo>, 19 April 2019).

