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National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion

Luxembourg

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European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

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

Luxembourg

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Summary

Data about homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) in Luxembourg are extremely rare, fragmented and uncoordinated. No central database exists. Nevertheless, an increase in homelessness in recent years has been observed. A number of new shelters and additional housing initiatives have been implemented in the last few years, including the social estate agency and Housing First projects.

In 2013, the Luxembourg government adopted a national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion for 2013-2020. The strategy adopts the full FEANTSA ETHOS typology to identify which groups of people are defined as homeless. The strategy advocates a holistic approach to the homeless person and advocates the governing principle of Housing First. A mid-term evaluation conducted in 2016-17 concluded by recommending the establishment of a steering committee to define indicators to measure the results of the implementing the strategy, and to incorporate responses related to health and employment.

Proper housing policies, especially social housing policies, could alleviate the impact of homelessness. Whereas three quarters of Luxembourg residents own their home, the rest are private sector tenants, public (social) housing being underdeveloped in Luxembourg. In addition, the gap between supply and demand in the housing market is steadily increasing, accompanied by an increase in prices. The social housing market is not effective in making housing available and affordable.

There is a wide variety of players working in Luxembourg in the field of HHE, including both public and private institutions: government administration by the relevant Ministries and two public housing providers; municipalities; private housing contractors and landlords; and non-profit organisations. The social accommodation services available for homeless people include emergency shelters, hostels, temporary and transitional supported accommodation, women's shelters and accommodation for people leaving institutions.

The national strategy started a vital collaboration between all players. In addition, the increasing use of a case-management approach has significantly improved the organisations' responses to people's needs.

Two main types of causal factors for HHE can be observed:

- economic and financial causes, such as loss of work, loss of income, over-indebtedness and the inability to pay rent; and
- causes relating to relationship problems within the family circle, such as conflict between family members, including spouses; violence in the family; and divorce and separation.

In addition, two other factors may be noted: health problems (primarily problems of drug or alcohol addiction) and institutionalisation (in hospitals and prisons).

The weaknesses of national policies include the gap between supply and demand in the housing market, particularly in the social rental market, and the fact that the government failed to involve the majority of municipalities either in increasing the construction of social housing or in the decentralisation of reception facilities.

Recommendations include action against the steady price increases in the housing market and to enhance the construction of social housing. In line with these developments, binding social housing quotas for municipalities should also be introduced. As secondary recommendations, the provision of transition houses for people leaving prison, and a full implementation of the Housing First concept in line with international standards, are identified. Finally, the mid-term evaluation of the national strategy also recommended that a steering group composed of representatives of all players should be established to monitor the strategy. This group's most important task would be to prepare both a final evaluation of the strategy and from this develop a new strategy for 2020 onwards. The establishment of a comprehensive common database of all services related to HHE is also urgently needed.

1 The nature and extent of homelessness and housing exclusion

Data about homelessness and housing exclusion (HHE) in Luxembourg are extremely rare, fragmented and uncoordinated. No central database exists and different players have their own statistics, which are not all based on the FEANTSA¹ ETHOS typology². Those that are do not always follow the typology exactly. We consider the following documents.

- A first quantitative analysis was contained in CEPS-Instead (2007)³.
- The next reliable information can be found in a report by a Ministry for the Family working group (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2011) produced as part of preparations for the 'National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020' (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, 2013), further details of which are described in Section 2.
- In 2016, a study was carried out to analyse inadequate housing (*mal-logement*) and housing exclusion within the framework of objective III of the national strategy (LISER, 2016).
- Between September 2015 and January 2016, a more qualitative evaluation of the Housing First pilot project took place (TNS-Ilres, 2016).
- An internal mid-term evaluation of the national strategy conducted by the Ministry for the Family was presented on 2 March 2017 to the organisations active in the field of homelessness (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a).
- The conclusions of biannual surveys realised between 2012 and 2017 with 19 different organisations managing adult accommodation structures were presented by the Ministry for the Family (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017b).
- Finally, we find some statistics in the annual activity reports of different Ministries cited in Table A2 (in the Annex).

As far as a definition of HHE is concerned, the national strategy recognises the definition of homelessness described in the above-mentioned working group report. This report refers to the full ETHOS Light typology (see Table A1 in the Annex). Administrative data are not, however, consistently collected according to this typology. They can in the main be processed according to the ETHOS Light typology, but for the operational category 'People living in accommodation for the homeless' there are only aggregate numbers for people living in hostels, in temporary accommodation and in transitional supported accommodation.

In addition, to date there are no data available on people leaving healthcare institutions (with the exception of psychiatric hospitals), for those about to leave penal institutions, for those living in non-conventional dwellings, or for those living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends.

The most recent publication with figures for all other living situations than those listed in the previous paragraph is LISER (2016). This report, however, itself relies on data compiled for other publications – the 2014 annual report of the Ministry for the Family (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2014) and CEPS-Instead (2007).

¹ Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless).

² The European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) has been acknowledged as the standard definition of homelessness (Jury of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2011); Tables A1 and A2 in the Annex use a specialist version, known as 'ETHOS Light': <https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion>.

³ CEPS-Instead = Centre d'Études de Populations, de Pauvreté et de Politiques Socio-économiques/International Networks for Studies in Technology, Environment, Alternatives, Development; nowadays trading under LISER (= Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research).

Table A2, therefore, presents the newest figures available from the Ministries for the Family and Health⁴ and, where appropriate, some figures from the mid-term evaluation of the national strategy and LISER (2016). For people living rough, the figures used are those from CEPS-Instead (2007), as no more recent data are available.

A representative of one non-governmental organisation (NGO) estimates the current number of rough sleepers at 300. In addition, it was noted that in 2016 vouchers for a total of 510 overnight stays in youth hostels had been distributed by the Ministry for the Family (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a).

A civil servant of the Ministry for National Education, Children and Youth stated by phone that a survey, conducted regularly by the Ministry among providers of accommodation for people aged 18-24, has established that the number of young people searching for accommodation is about 100 per month (although some people may have been counted more than once).

The analysis in CEPS-Instead (2007) was based on a one-week survey, and counted 715 people, including: 30 living rough; 137 in emergency shelters; 312 in hostels and temporary or transitional accommodation; 70 in women's shelters; 40 leaving psychiatric hospitals; 88 living in personal accommodation (but with no specific details on whether their living situations really corresponded to 'mobile homes', 'non-conventional buildings' or 'temporary structures'); and 38 living in conventional housing with family or friends.

LISER (2016) counted a total of 2,059 homeless people⁵, including 30 living rough; 199 in emergency shelters; 1,273 in hostels and temporary or transitional accommodation; 337 in women's shelters; and 220 leaving psychiatric hospitals.

Table A2 gives a total of 5,104 people living through a period of homelessness in 2018 (or 2007, 2014 and 2017, for which no newer data are available), including: 30 living rough; 794 in emergency accommodation (after estimating those staying in shelters for drug addicts at 200); 3,723 in either shelters or transitional/temporary accommodation; 337 in women's shelters⁶; and 220 in temporary accommodation after leaving institutions. These figures did not include 773 people in the 'winter action' programme (WAK; see below).

In addition⁷ to the data in Table A2, during 2018 a total of 2,721 people were accommodated in centres for refugees, including 1,339 beneficiaries of international protection (*bénéficiaires de protection internationale* – BPI) who were not able to leave the centres because of the lack of available housing; 570 so-called Dublin cases⁸ were awaiting their transfer to another EU country in a special centre called an SHUK (*structure d'hébergement d'urgence Kirchberg*); and 423 people were placed in a so-called retention centre after their asylum request had been rejected, and were waiting to be returned to their homeland.

Throughout the different publications, there is also differences in which statistics are collected: some count annual footfall including the number of different users, while others report the number of places offered or the mean average number of places used per

⁴ No data were available from the Ministry for Equal Opportunities.

⁵ It is not always clear whether the count represents the number of places offered or the average number used per night.

⁶ This figure stems from 2014 (LISER, 2016); it may have increased since then. It was not possible to clarify this question, because of the non-availability of figures from the Ministry for Equal Opportunities. For one of the NGO providers, for example, LISER reported 15 people in collective accommodation and 102 in private housing. The latest report of the NGO Femmes en Détresse (2019) enumerates 103 people in collective accommodation and 39 in private housing. But the figures are not comparable, because LISER counted the occupants in a single month (March or October 2014), whereas Femmes en Détresse counted people accommodated during the year 2018. In the absence of better data, the figure of 337 people in Table A2 has been kept unchanged.

⁷ All these figures are reported in Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes (2018).

⁸ According to EU regulation No 604/2013, the so-called Dublin Regulation, people from non-EU countries entering the EU to seek asylum have to be treated in the first EU country they entered.

night. In order to compare consistent data over time, it is only possible to use data from the same or repeat surveys.

According to the 2018 annual report of the Ministry for the Family (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2018), the number of different people⁹ hosted annually in hostels and temporary/transitional accommodation increased from 1,044 in 2012 to 3,318 in 2018 – again thanks to an increase in the services and/or places offered. The number of people who were accommodated by the new 'social estate agency' (Agence Immobilière Sociale – AIS)¹⁰ increased from 331 in 2009 to 2,449 in 2016, the latter including 1,161 children. It is not possible to conclude whether people unable to find places to stay in overnight shelters (because of longer stays by homeless people) have found alternative places through the new initiatives or whether they are sleeping rough, because there are no figures on the number of people living in public places or outdoors.

Even if the above-mentioned data are not easily comparable, it can be concluded that the incidence of HHE in Luxembourg has increased since 2007.

The 2018 annual report of the Ministry for the Family showed that the number of stays in the two overnight shelters under contract with it had increased from 25,399 to 28,685 between 2010 and 2018. While these figures seem to indicate an increase in homelessness, it should be noted that during the same period the number of different people using the shelters throughout the year fell, from 658 to 347. This may be explained in part by a number of new shelters and additional housing initiatives implemented in the same period, such as 'night stops'¹¹ (*haltes de nuit*) and Housing First projects. However, the aforementioned increase reflects the evolution in the average length of stay, which rose from a little over one month in 2010 to 83 days in 2018. Increasing vulnerability – more than two thirds of users are (substance-) dependent or suffering from mental health problems – leads to longer stays.

Since there are no studies investigating the extent to which the difficult situation in the private housing market – namely high demand and lack of housing, in particular social housing¹² – has contributed to the increased number of people experiencing HHE, no conclusion can be reached on this issue. The mere fact that 'the rental burden has increased for lower income households over the last decade, with 26% of tenants dedicating more than 40% of their income to rental costs in 2016' (European Commission, 2019) may lead to the conclusion that rental overburden may indeed have contributed to growing homelessness.

The latest annual reports of the Ministries for the Family (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2018) and of Health (Ministère de la Santé, 2017) also provide some insight into the profile of the homeless population, presenting several breakdowns, albeit not consistently across the different categories.

The largest single age group of people in hostels, temporary accommodation and transitional supported accommodation were those under 18 (about 38%), which stems partly from the fact that in these kinds of accommodation parents live with their children. In the two emergency shelters the most numerous age groups were 31-40 (30%) and 41-50 (25%), whereas 52% of the users of the shelter for drug addicts were aged 35-44.

⁹ Here 'different people' means that 3,318 people were accommodated during 2018 for some period, rather than that there existed 3,318 places.

¹⁰ For further details on AIS see the short description in Section 2 or refer to www.ais.lu.

¹¹ Night stops are described in Section 3.

¹² The 2019 country report within the European Semester framework points to steadily increasing prices, an insufficient housing supply and underdeveloped social housing (European Commission, 2019).

In relation to gender, the 2014 figures from LISER (2016) show a distribution of 52% women to 48% men for all the living situations covered¹³ (except rough sleepers). This is due to the fact that women were a majority among people in hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional supported accommodation and women's shelters; whereas in emergency accommodation 72% were men and 28% women in the two overnight shelters and the two night stops, and 86% of those in the shelter for drug addicts were men and 14% women.

There are no figures for the length of time that people are homeless, or any information about how they may switch between accommodation options. With regard to the length of stay in the different structures, in the two emergency shelters it has been observed that 25% of people stay more than 6 months, 15% for 3-6 months, 28% between 1 week and 3 months, 5% 4-7 days, and 27% less than 3 days. For women's shelters, 46% stay more than 2 years, 28% 1-2 years, 14% 6-12 months, and 12% less than 6 months.

No data exist for the household structure, migration background and ethnicity, legal status and health condition of the homeless. The report from the Ministry for the Family includes only a few breakdowns by broad groups of citizenship (reporting 26% Luxembourg nationals, 40% EU nationals and 34% non-EU nationals). We may conclude, however, that all the people in the refugee shelters are foreigners from outside the EU.

2 Relevant strategies and policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

2.1 National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020

On 18 January 2013 the Luxembourg government adopted a 'National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020' (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, 2013). The strategy builds on a report (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, 2011) presented in 2011 by a working group (*plateforme de collaboration*) initiated by the Ministry for the Family. Besides representatives of that Ministry, the members of the working group came from the Ministries for Housing and Health, the union of local authorities (Syndicat des Villes et Communes Luxembourgeoises – Syvicol), the city of Luxembourg, the city of Esch-sur-Alzette, the CEPS-Instead and NGOs active in the field of homelessness.

The working group report defined homelessness for Luxembourg, presented a review of the situation, enumerated some causes, drew up a statement of proposed measures and enunciated the principles of a national strategy against homelessness.

¹³ It should be noted that there are no data for people about to leave penal institutions, for those living in non-conventional dwellings, or for those living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends. Therefore, these situations are not covered.

The strategy puts forward four objectives:

1. to provide stable and appropriate private housing to people who are long-term homeless or have a chronic addiction, to people who live in precarious and inadequate housing and to people leaving institutions;
2. to react quickly and adequately to emergencies;
3. to prevent homelessness; and
4. to consolidate existing measures and strengthen governance.

A total number of 14 measures are described, including between one and eight per objective (two for objective I, three for objective II, eight for objective III and one for objective IV).

The strategy advocates a holistic approach to the homeless person: one that takes into account their social, psychological and medical needs, including differentiating between urgent and vital needs of those who find themselves on the street and the needs of people who have spent part of their life on the streets or in specialised structures. The proposed approaches must also vary according to the urgency of the situation. Thus, a certain number of measures will consist of immediate intervention, whereas others will relate to the prevention of homelessness. All these different approaches, however, are linked by the governing principle of the Housing First model, which maintains that the first objective to be reached by a person who has just lost their home is to find stable and sustainable housing quickly.

A mid-term evaluation was carried out by the Ministry for the Family between June 2016 and February 2017 (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a). The evaluator scrutinised the 14 measures, finding that 3 had been completed, 6 were ongoing, 2 had not yet been started and 3 had been abandoned. Recommendations were given for the 11 measures not yet implemented. The principle challenges identified were:

- the need to improve communication and information exchange between the strategy's players to strengthen transparency in the implementation of measures;
- a lack of affordable and accessible living space;
- conflict between increasing the amount of available housing and adequately caring for the target population; and
- maintaining the emergency response network.

The report concluded with three overall recommendations:

- form a steering committee that could be called "Homeless platform";
- define indicators (and targets) to measure the results of measures adopted; and
- while maintaining the focus of the strategy on housing, complete it by incorporating responses related to health and employment.

2.2 Winter action (WAK)

Another, albeit more limited, public programme applies in winter, usually from 1 December to 31 March each year¹⁴: this is the 'winter action' (*action hiver, wanteraktioun – WAK*)¹⁵. The last edition ran from 23 November 2018 to 31 March 2019; it sheltered 773 persons in a special overnight shelter, reaching a total of 14,192 overnight stays. A special day centre was also opened for 121 days, offering meals and social assistance to

¹⁴ Depending on early or late periods of extreme cold, the winter action can start earlier or continue later.

¹⁵ See https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiqués/2019/04-avril/05-wanteraktioun.html.

1,501 different people, for a total footfall of 17,234 people. The WAK has been implemented by the government since 2001 in order to prevent the homeless from becoming victims of hypothermia during periods of extreme cold. Partnering organisations are: Inter-Actions asbl, which is responsible for field coordination; the Red Cross (Croix Rouge luxembourgeoise), which manages the day centre; and Caritas Accueil et Solidarité asbl, which manages the night shelter. In addition to the employees of the three organisations (a number of them being specially recruited for the WAK every year), 170 volunteers supported the programme. With the recent construction of a dedicated building, the next edition will no longer take place in the temporary rented premises used in previous years. It will (hopefully) offer better possibilities for the clients, as well as for the employees and volunteers responsible for the services.

2.3 Social housing

Proper housing policies, especially social housing policies, could alleviate the impact of homelessness. Housing policies in Luxembourg include public support for property acquisition, public (and to a lesser extent private) provision of social housing for rent, as well as some incentives to stimulate housing supply and some instruments to support vulnerable people in their search for housing.

As a result of the long-standing public support for property acquisition (European Commission, 2017) three quarters of Luxembourg residents own their home (Housing Europe, 2017), and the rest are private sector tenants (STATEC, 2018), public (social) housing being underdeveloped in Luxembourg (Cour des Comptes, 2019; European Commission, 2019).

Not only do the poorest classes of the population have to deal with difficulties in access to housing, but this problem is also increasingly affecting the lower middle class¹⁶. This phenomenon is further amplified by the growing in-work poverty rate, which is the second highest in Europe (see also Section 3.3).

The 2019 Country Report for Luxembourg (European Commission, 2019) and the 2018 Country Specific Recommendations (European Union, 2018) stress the gap between supply and demand in the housing market, which is caused by a constant increase in demand, as well as bottlenecks on the supply side. The Luxembourg statistical office (STATEC) estimated that the number of ready-to-use dwellings needed was 6,500 per year (Peltier, 2011). These figures have also been referred to by, amongst others, the Luxembourg Central Bank (Banque Centrale du Luxembourg, 2017). STATEC has recently updated its forecast (from the period 2010-2030 to 2018-2060) and estimates the needs as being between 5,600 and 7,500 new dwellings per year according to different scenarios (Peltier, 2019). As the delivery of new dwellings between 2010 and 2016 totalled 19,250, corresponding to 3,208 per year (Observatoire de l'Habitat, 2019)¹⁷, the supply shortfall is steadily increasing. The main result is the constant increase in rental prices (Banque Centrale du Luxembourg, 2017), which makes it all the more necessary to increase social housing.

With the absence of a clear definition of social housing in Luxembourg legislation (Cour des Comptes, 2019), government policy in this field has been based since 1979 on a law (Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 1979) envisaging public support to municipalities, civil society organisations and two public housing providers (Fonds du Logement and Société Nationale des Habitations à Bon Marché – SNHBM). A law passed in 2008 (Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2008) introduced a framework – the 'housing pact' (*pacte logement*) –

¹⁶ Compare the reasoning in chapter 8 'Housing' of the new government's programme (Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 2018a).

¹⁷ In a recent publication, STATEC reported that the maximum output per year was 4,444 dwellings in 2008, falling between 2009 and 2011, and increasing again in the following years to reach 3,856 dwellings delivered in 2016 (STATEC, 2019).

for a covenant with local authorities concerning the construction of new housing and the provision of more dwellings available for the social rental market¹⁸.

AIS has been operative since 2009. Its objective is to act as intermediary to organise the renting of dwellings from owners and to let them out to low-income households, as well as provide rental management for the owners and (together with other social service providers) social support for the tenants.

Instruments to support vulnerable people include the existing rent subsidies (Swinnen, 2016), which have been slightly reformed since 1 January 2018. These may alleviate the burden on tenants somewhat, but the overall amounts are inadequate and take-up is too low, even if potential coverage is very broad (Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 2018b). Another measure is the potential state guarantee (*garantie de l'état*) for tenants, which frees them from having to provide the usual three-month rent deposit requested by landlords. This measure is only granted by the commission responsible if the household's income is below 2.5 times the minimum income (*revenu d'inclusion sociale* - REVIS), and if the rent payable does not exceed 30% of its income (Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 2018b). This excludes a number of vulnerable people from benefiting from this measure, as 37.4% of tenants who are at risk of poverty devote more than 40% of their income to rental costs (STATEC, 2018).

The new Luxembourg government programme (December 2018) comprises a large number of measures to improve the housing situation, including:

- introducing official definitions of social housing and affordable housing;
- tripling the output of the two public housing providers;
- limiting the sale of dwellings constructed by public providers, focusing more on the rental market;
- drafting and implementing a new pact with municipalities (*pacte logement 2.0*);
- fighting land speculation;
- providing incentives for owners to sell or rent properties (including tax measures);
- enhancing the public purchase of land;
- emphasising the activities of AIS (and similar projects) including social rental management (*gestion locative sociale*);
- controlling the development of rent levels; and
- promoting new living arrangements, such as flat-sharing and intergenerational habitats (Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 2018a).

2.4 Regional/local strategies

Since there are no regional public governance structures in Luxembourg, regional strategies do not exist. Some municipalities, however, run various local social services for homeless people or are planning to do so. After the law reforming social assistance (*aide sociale*) was enacted in 2009 (Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2009) all 102 municipalities (or associations thereof in the case of municipalities with fewer than 6,000 inhabitants) created social offices (*offices sociaux*) to deal with the social assistance that citizens are entitled to according to the same law. This right to social assistance is defined in the law as the right for people in need, and their families, to be provided with access to goods and services appropriate to their particular circumstances and to help them acquire or maintain their autonomy. This also includes a responsibility on the state to manage the housing situation. In this context, 7 of the 14 measures in the "National strategy against

¹⁸ See <http://pacte-logement.lu>.

homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" are addressed to the municipalities, which are responsible for ensuring, as far as possible, the accommodation of all persons domiciled within their area. As a result, municipalities and their social offices are important players in the fight against HHE.

2.5 Adequacy of funding mechanisms to address HHE

Generally speaking, the funding mechanisms are broadly adequate. The budget law for 2019, adopted on 25 April 2019, foresees an overall surplus of expenses of 9% compared with 2018. In the budget, expenditure on the activities analysed in this report will increase by between 13 and 20%, while those for the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" will increase by 16% compared with 2018 (Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2019). This is a logical consequence of the fact that the strategy contains a number of new projects and an enhancement of existing activities (Housing First, new innovative projects, more places in shelters and other accommodation projects). A number of activities in the field of combating HHE have seen their funding extended and have therefore been substantially expanded:

- the AIS and similar projects have increased the number of facilities under management;
- the above-mentioned rent subsidies were introduced in 2015 and then reformed from 1 January 2018 in order to allow more people access to them (reducing the income cap and reducing the maximum rental cost burden from 33% to 25% of income); and
- the above-mentioned public housing providers (Fonds du Logement and SNHBM) have tripled the amount of social housing they want to finish constructing in the near future, compared with housing provided up to 2015.

Whilst the above describes recent advances made in funding mechanisms to address HHE, two negative observations must be made.

A project, developed by Caritas Luxembourg at the request of the Ministry for Justice, to create transition houses (*maisons de transition*) for people leaving penal institutions (Caritas Luxembourg, 2018) was placed under scrutiny by the Ministry for the Family and the Ministry for Justice (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2018; Ministère de la Justice, 2018), following which the Ministry for the Family decided not to pursue it.

Second, the planned decentralisation of emergency shelters was not realised as foreseen in the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020", as a consequence of the unwillingness of municipalities to engage in this field, and their reluctance to allow social housing to be constructed on their territories. This is not only a question of adequate funding, but also (and even more so) a problem of acceptance and political will.

2.6 EU funding

According to the documents listed in the References at the end of this report, EU funding has not contributed to the activities and projects listed in Table A2. However, other measures addressing homeless people amongst others have benefited well from EU funding. This is the case for the social groceries that are partly funded by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), and for integration measures targeting refugees, which are partly financed through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

2.7 Implementation and monitoring process

As mentioned above, the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" was based on the findings of the report prepared by a working group involving all stakeholders. The strategy itself foresees, in objective IV, that all players will

collaborate in effective networking to create synergies and to optimise available resources. The number of meetings for concertation is listed as an indicator. In reality very few such meetings have taken place. In a meeting on 2 March 2017, the results of the above-mentioned mid-term evaluation were presented to the stakeholders. The evaluator had some difficulties in commenting on the steering of the process – no information about the number of coordination meetings having been made available. Some coordination in the field of youth housing and by the Ministry for Housing was nevertheless acknowledged. One conclusion of the evaluation was that a steering committee should be formed involving all competent political departments of the government as well as the organisations active in the field, and that the financial resources for such a committee should be provided (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a). This was explicitly recognised by the Ministry for the Family in its annual activity report for 2017 (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017c): however, according to the NGOs consulted, no steering committee has yet been established.

Further measures will therefore need to be taken regarding the implementation and monitoring of the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020".

2.8 Use of EU indicators

EU indicators on housing cost overburden, overcrowding, severe housing deprivation, and arrears of mortgage or rent payments¹⁹, as well as others, were used in the study on housing exclusion realised by LISER under measure 8 of objective III of the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020". The other documents related to the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" do not refer to these indicators.

The statistical office used the housing cost overburden and overcrowding indicators in its last report on the state of social cohesion (STATEC, 2018).

In an opinion on affordable housing (CES, 2013) the Economic and Social Council of Luxembourg used the following indicators: housing cost overburden, overcrowding and severe housing deprivation.

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

3.1 Service provision

There is a wide variety of players working in Luxembourg in the field of HHE.

The players combating HHE include both public and private institutions. On the public side there is the government administration, represented by the relevant Ministries and two public housing providers (Fonds du Logement and SNHBM as mentioned above), together with the municipalities and their social offices. The Ministries are responsible for strategy, funding and coordination, while the public housing providers carry out the planning, construction and delivery of (social) housing. The municipalities are in one respect their counterparts, having control over their territory with regard to any building-related issues. On the other hand they are in many respects also executives, as they may act as social housing builders and landlords. Municipalities may also provide other services to the homeless, such as night shelters and supported accommodation, or enter into

¹⁹ These indicators are defined and available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>.

agreements with NGOs for the management of such services. The municipality social offices (or offices of associated municipalities, see above) may then take any action to secure access to housing for the homeless within their territory.

On the private side, there are naturally all the private housing contractors and landlords active in both the rental market and the property market, in the sense that every additional dwelling helps to close the gap between the housing supply and demand in general, and by extension also helps to close the gap for the more vulnerable population. For the purpose of reviewing service providers active in the fight against HHE, this paper focuses on the private builders and landlords who provide social housing, in particular through conventions with the Ministry for Housing, which offers a 75% subsidy to non-profit organisations (NGOs, foundations and some religious organisations) that provide social housing.

There are also more than 20 NGOs providing services to the homeless under contract with Ministries or municipalities (overnight shelters; night stops; hostels; temporary, transitional and supported accommodation; shelters for women; housing for young people; centres for refugees).

Despite the lack of a definition of social housing in Luxembourg, the number of dwellings available for more vulnerable people was 2,904 in 2017, the waiting list of the Fonds du Logement alone was for 2,700 households in May 2017, whereas the total need for social housing was estimated in 2012 at 30,000 units (Cour des Comptes, 2019).

Besides social housing, the following main players provide a range of support.

- The municipality of Esch-sur-Alzette runs an overnight shelter; a second one is run by the NGO Caritas Accueil et Solidarité; and a third, specialising in drug addicts, is run by the Comité National de Défense Sociale (CNDS). The Red Cross and Caritas both run one night stop each; and both organisations, together with Inter-Actions asbl collaborate in the WAK organised by the Ministry for the Family. Whilst the shelter for drug addicts is managed under contract with the Ministry for Health, all other services mentioned above are provided under contract with the Ministry for the Family.
- The Red Cross, CNDS, Caritas, Wunnéngshëllef and three other NGOs, as well as the municipality of Esch-sur-Alzette, all run hostels and temporary, transitional and supported accommodation under contract with the Ministry for the Family. In this category, the Ministry also counts AIS (for more details see below) and AIS Kordall (a social estate agency established by the municipalities situated in the River Chiers valley, in Luxembourg known as the 'Kordall'). Other municipalities running similar services do so without contracts with the Ministry for the Family, instead relying totally on their contracts with the Ministry for Housing. However, despite the fact that "housing first" was declared the governing principle of the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020", and despite the fact that other NGOs (Red Cross, Caritas, Jugend- an Drogenhëllef) and the municipality of Esch-sur-Alzette run a total of 51 lodgings under the Housing First model, the official statement by the Ministry for the Family in its activity report counted only the 22 studios of CNDS as Housing First lodgings (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2018).
- AIS was established in 2009 and is financed through contracts with both the Ministry for the Family and the Ministry for Housing. The AIS business model involves renting dwellings on the private market from landlords at prices below the market rate, and sub-letting these to vulnerable people for a rent set according to their income²⁰. In order to promote the supply of dwellings, landlords may benefit from several advantages in exchange for renting at lower rates. First, AIS

²⁰ See www.ais.lu.

guarantees the landlords continuous payment of the rent, regardless of whether the dwelling is occupied or not. Second, landlords receive a guarantee that their accommodation will receive regular maintenance and be totally renovated when they decide to end the agreement. In addition, in order to support the project further the government has decided that 50% of the rental income received from a social estate agency is exempt from tax. These measures have persuaded a number of landlords, who had had bad experiences renting their properties on the private rental market and had withdrawn them from the market, to rent their properties once more through AIS, albeit at lower but more secure rates. As a result, AIS has grown steadily since it began in 2009, currently having 523 dwellings under management (as of February 2019). It lodged 2,078 people in 2018.

- Jugend-Wunnen/Wunnéngshëllef, La Main Tendue and Betreit Wunnen fir Jonk Leit (from the municipality of Hesperange) all run specialised houses with accommodation for young people, under contract with the Ministry for the Family.
- The NGOs Fondation Maison de la Porte Ouverte, Femmes en Détresse, Conseil National des Femmes and Fondation Pro Familia run accommodation services for young girls, women and mothers with children under contract with the Ministry for Equal Opportunities.
- The Red Cross and Caritas also run a number of refugee centres under contract with the OLAI²¹ (Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes, 2018).

3.2 How effective are all these projects, measures, offers?

A conclusion as to the effectiveness of the measures deployed under the “National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020” is not possible because of the lack of appropriate indicators.

Given the low proportion of social housing on the rental market, 1.6% in 2015 according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)²², and the long waiting lists and needs described above, it can be concluded that the social housing market is not effective in making housing available and affordable.

Measure 3 of objective III (prevent homelessness) of the national strategy is aimed at inciting municipalities to put into practice the provision of article 26 of a law from 2006 (Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2006). This provision assigns to municipalities the task of ensuring, as far as possible, the lodging of all residents on their territory. According to the mid-term evaluation (Ministère de la Famille, de l’Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a), this measure was implemented by 17 municipalities, who have organised accommodation for 51 people. Since only 28 municipalities (out of 102) responded to the questionnaire addressed to them within the framework of the mid-term evaluation, it cannot be concluded whether or not this measure was effective, as too little information was available. In addition, the municipalities that responded have stated that they experienced difficulties in carrying out the task due to a lack of available accommodation.

With respect to the Housing First approach, a total of only 73 apartments were made available in 2018. In contrast, AIS and AIS Kordall have housed 2,449 people in 2018, but these will have to leave their dwellings at the latest after three years. In this respect, the AIS dwellings act as a stepping-stone towards permanent housing. AIS counted 523 dwellings under management as at 28 February 2019. Even though the AIS waiting list

²¹ OLAI = Office luxembourgeois de l’Accueil et de l’Intégration, the body responsible for sheltering refugees, which depended until 2018 on the Ministry for the Family, and currently depends on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; OLAI will soon be replaced by the newly created ONA (Office National d’Accueil), the relevant draft law currently going parliament (Chambre des Députés, 2019).

²² See <http://www.oecd.org/social/affordable-housing-database.htm>.

still totalled 1,208 households in February 2019, this scheme should be counted as a success.

Do the services offer comprehensive and flexible support according to people's needs? As a result of the national strategy, an intensive collaboration between all players from the NGO sector began, which not only allows an exchange of information on common problems and achievements, but also promotes the search for the right solution for people's needs. In addition, the increasing use of a case-management approach has significantly improved the organisations' responses to people's needs.

3.3 The causes of homelessness and housing exclusion

CEPS-Instead (2007) established two main types of reasons given by people responding to the question on how they lost their previous accommodation. On the one hand there were economic and financial causes such as loss of work, loss of income, over-indebtedness and the inability to pay rent; these accounted for 31% of the population polled. On the other hand, there were causes relating to relationship problems within the family circle, such as conflict between family members, including spouses; violence in the family; divorce and separation – these accounted for 34% of interviewees. Besides these principal causes, two minor types of reason completed the picture: 15% quoted health problems (primarily problems of drug or alcohol addiction) and 5% quoted institutionalisation (in hospitals and prisons)²³. The report by the working group set up by the Ministry for the Family to prepare the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" endorsed these two main causes (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2011), and additionally listed the following vulnerable populations:

- young people under 18 who are vulnerable to risks during transition phases, from disadvantaged backgrounds, runaways and school dropouts;
- young people aged 18-34 for whom it is very difficult to afford housing on the free market, especially when personal problems and over-indebtedness are also factors;
- elderly and/or chronically ill homeless people who are unable to find places in traditional homes for the elderly;
- single-parent families and large families who experience the highest at-risk-of-poverty rates, and are often also confronted with inadequate housing if they fail to access affordable housing;
- people leaving institutions, who have not only lost their accommodation over the period they were in clinics, prisons or similar institutions, but were also removed from the population register and have therefore lost the possibility of support from their municipality; and
- people without social rights, especially migrants of European origin who cannot be recognised as refugees, but who, in the absence of a definitive right to residence, have no rights to social assistance²⁴.

More light may be shed on these reflections from 2011 by looking at some findings of a recent ESPN Report on in-work poverty in Luxembourg (Urbé, 2019). Whereas the overall at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion (AROPE) rate was 21.5% in 2017, slightly below the EU average (22.4%), it had nevertheless increased since both 2011 (16.8%) and 2014 (19.0%)²⁵. The number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Luxembourg was around 126,000 in 2017, whereas Luxembourg's Europe 2020 target was to reach

²³ These causes are very much in line with the ones enumerated in Frazer and Marlier (2009).

²⁴ This is a Europe-wide problem related to unresolved migration issues, which cannot be compensated for by services aimed at helping homeless people: see the recommendations in Jury of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness (2011).

²⁵ Eurostat database (ilc-peps01), extracted on 13 June 2019.

half of this figure by 2020 – that is, 66,000 persons at risk²⁶. In 2017, the in-work poverty rate in Luxembourg was 13.7%, which was the second highest figure in the EU²⁷. The worsening in the overall at-risk-of-poverty rate, and particularly in the in-work-poverty rate, exacerbated the above-mentioned difficulties in accessing housing for certain categories of the population.

LISER (2016) enumerates among the causes of HHE the sharp increases in rents observed in the housing market, the limited stock of social housing for rent, a significant over-representation of poor households in unhealthy housing, and the fact that unattached individuals are particularly affected by the risk of housing exclusion. It also identifies two categories of households presenting the highest risk of falling into housing exclusion:

- tenants in the private market, who have been greatly affected by the sharp rises in rents, especially since the social rental market is very small; and
- the poorest young households, who are over-represented among tenants in the private market, and who often spend more than 40% of their disposable income on housing expenses.

Concerning the shortfall in the delivery of social housing, in particular of social housing for rent, the special report of the Luxembourg Court of Auditors on the provision of social housing (Cour des Comptes, 2019) contains a certain number of recommendations to enhance the delivery of social housing. Amongst these the following should be stressed.

- The land reserve of public developers, especially in terms of building land, is insufficient.
- There is a need for incentives for municipalities to take initiatives in the field of housing, especially social housing for rent; a strategy to this end is missing; the means deployed in this direction are too weak; and a formal counselling unit for municipalities should be put in place to support them in this often unfamiliar task.
- The housing pact (*pacte logement*) mentioned in Section 2 was aimed at establishing covenants between the government and local authorities, but does not contain any provision for the construction of social housing for rent; in the “National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020” one planned measure is aimed at creating the legal basis for fixing binding social housing quotas for municipalities (the Court of Auditors also noted that this measure seems to have been abandoned).
- The Court of Auditors also recommends that public developers should collaborate with private developers to ensure that social dwellings make up 10% of projects beyond a certain scale.
- Despite the fact that some measures in the housing package (*paquet logement*)²⁸ have been implemented, an evaluation has never taken place and the package has been abandoned; however, a review of the measures that have not been implemented should be carried out, such as the participation of natural persons in real estate cooperatives.
- The experience and capacities of private developers should also be used to enhance social housing construction. The Ministry for Housing should formulate concrete regulations on how their projects might be subsidised by the government.

²⁶ See European Commission (2019), p. 10.

²⁷ Eurostat database (ilc_iw01), extracted on 13 June 2019.

²⁸ The housing package was presented on 8 April 2011 by the Minister for Housing; it constitutes a set of 21 measures to be implemented in order to realise the governmental declaration on housing policy. See: https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/articles/2011/04-avril/08-schank.html.

- The strategy of the Fonds du Logement should be recorded in a document, accompanied by objectives to be realised and performance indicators.

All these recommendations mirror an equal number of causes of housing exclusion.

3.4 Important innovations in the provision of homelessness services within the last five years

The first contract for a project officially classified as a Housing First project was signed in 2014 between the Ministry for the Family and the NGO CNDS. The project consisted of 22 apartments in a residential building formerly used as home for the elderly. Since all 22 apartments are together in one building, the project does not strictly match the criteria for Housing First (see e.g. Fitzpatrick, 2011; Pleace, 2011 and 2018; or Pleace et al., 2018; and TNS-Ilres, 2016). However, other players consider the philosophy of some of their projects to be in line with Housing First or 'communal Housing First' principles, without having been officially recognised as such by the Ministry. Nevertheless, the developments before the conclusion of the first contract, and the collaboration between the Ministry and the NGOs, marked a turning point in the overall official approach to HHE.

In 2017 contracts were signed between the Ministry for the Family and two organisations, the Red Cross and Caritas, to install two night stops (*Haltes de nuit*) in Luxembourg city. The night stops offered low-threshold access to the homeless, enabling them to rest during the night, warm up, and wash themselves and their clothes, as well as have a snack and breakfast; they were even allowed dogs. The aim is to renew contact with people sleeping rough, people who were expelled from a night shelter because of their behaviour, or people who had not been accepted because of their dog. These night stops work in close contact with street workers.

'Villa Armand' for older addicted persons, and 'Casa mia' for single-parent addicted mothers with their children, are two new projects launched in 2014 and 2015 and operated by the NGO Jugend- an Drogenhëllef.

Following the success of AIS since 2009, in 2015 the Ministry for Housing also started granting monthly subsidies of €100 per lodging to other actors that provided accommodation according to the social rental management (*gestion locative sociale*) model first implemented by AIS.

A series of other innovative services for the homeless outside of the housing sector have been introduced in recent years, including an emergency telephone service (*premier appel*) and several low-threshold day centres (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2017a).

3.5 Main weaknesses/gaps in combating HHE

The main weaknesses in the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020" primarily correspond to some of the above-mentioned reasons for HHE, such as the high prices in the rental market combined with the lack of social housing.

Another weakness lies in the fact that the government failed to involve the majority of municipalities either in increased construction of social housing or in the decentralisation of reception facilities such as day and night shelters and hostels.

A further weakness lies in the fact that the planned measure 1 under objective III, aimed at creating the legal basis for fixing binding social housing quotas for municipalities, has since been abandoned.

3.6 Some recommendations for improvement

The government should establish a comprehensive common database of all services provided by different players under contract with different Ministries. The definition of homelessness should be based on the ETHOS Light typology. This must be done in a concerted, transparent way, and the database must be publicly accessible.

Based on the above weaknesses, the first priorities, albeit long-term ones, should be to fight the steady increase in house prices with more incisive measures in the housing market, and to enhance the construction of social housing by public developers, municipalities and private developers. The latter involves convincing the municipalities that they have an important role to play, and providing them with the necessary advisory structure.

In line with these developments, binding social housing quotas for municipalities should also be introduced.

More short-term improvements could lie in the rapid provision of transition houses for people leaving prisons (and other institutions apart from psychiatric clinics, where such possibilities already exist) and a full implementation of the Housing First concept in line with international standards.

Finally, according to one recommendation of the mid-term evaluation, a steering group composed of representatives of all players should be established for the monitoring of the "National strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion 2013-2020". This group's most important task would be to prepare both a final evaluation of the 2013-2020 strategy, and based on this assessment develop a new strategy for 2020 onwards.

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Annex

Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Luxembourg

| Operational category | | Living situation | | Definition | Defined as homeless in Luxembourg |
|----------------------|---|------------------|---|---|--|
| 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 | | Yes |
| 4 | People living in institutions | 7 | Healthcare institutions | Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing | Yes, but for people leaving institutions, not for those living in institutions |
| | | 8 | Penal institutions | | No housing available prior to release |
| 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 | 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 | Yes |

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

| Operational category | | Living situation | | Most recent number | Period covered | Source (*) |
|----------------------|---|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | People living rough | 1 | Public space/ external space | 30 people | 6-12 February 2006 | CEPS-Instead (2007) |
| 2 | People in emergency accommodation | 2 | Overnight shelters | a) 12,587 stays in a shelter for drug addicts b) 28,685 stays for 347 different people (***) in 2 overnight shelters c) 247 different people in 2 night stops with 21 places d) 773 different people for 14,192 stays | During 2017 | MiSa (2017) |
| | | | | | During 2018 | MFI (2018) |
| | | | | | Idem | Idem |
| | | | | | "Winter-action" (WAK) between 23 November 2018 and 31 March 2019 | MFI (2019) |
| 3 | People living in accommodation for the homeless | 3 | Homeless hostels | For living conditions 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 altogether: 3,723 different people, including 2,449 by AIS and AIS Kordall | 2016/2018 | MTE (2017), MFI (2018), MiSa (2017) |
| | | 4 | Temporary accommodation | | | |
| | | 5 | Transitional supported accommodation | | | |
| | | 6 | Women's shelter or refuge accommodation | | | |
| 4 | People living in institutions | 7 | Healthcare institutions | 220 ^(****) | 2014 | LISER (2016) |
| | | 8 | Penal institutions ^(****) | | | |
| 5 | People living in non- conventional dwellings due to lack of housing | 9 | Mobile homes | | | |
| | | 10 | Non-conventional buildings | | | |
| | | 11 | Temporary structures | | | |
| 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 | | | |

(*) Sources: MFI = Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région; MiSa = Ministère de la Santé; MTE = Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région.

(**) During the year, 347 different people were sheltered for some overnight stays. A maximum of 30,660 overnight stays would have been possible if all 84 places in the two shelters had been occupied every night.

(***) Only people having left psychiatric hospitals; no other data available.

(****) There are no statistics about people leaving penal institutions. A project, developed by Caritas Luxembourg at the request of the Ministry for Justice, to create transition houses for these people was placed under scrutiny by the Ministries for the Family and for Justice (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région, 2018; Ministère de la Justice, 2018); subsequently the Ministry for the Family decided not to pursue the project.

