



EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion

Albania

Elira Jorgoni



Social Europe

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Directorate C — Social Affairs

Unit C.2 — Modernisation of social protection systems

Contact: Giulia Pagliani

E-mail: Giulia.PAGLIANI@ec.europa.eu

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

**ESPN Thematic Report on
National Strategies to Fight
Homelessness and Housing
Exclusion**

Albania

2019

Elira Jorgoni

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) was established in July 2014 on the initiative of the European Commission to provide high-quality and timely independent information, advice, analysis and expertise on social policy issues in the European Union and neighbouring countries.

The ESPN brings together into a single network the work that used to be carried out by the European Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, the Network for the Analytical Support on the Socio-Economic Impact of Social Protection Reforms (ASISP) and the MISSOC (Mutual Information Systems on Social Protection) secretariat.

The ESPN is managed by the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER) and APPLICA, together with the European Social Observatory (OSE).

For more information on the ESPN, see: <http://ec.europa.eusocialmain.jsp?catId=1135&langId=en>

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.***

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission, however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

© European Union, 2019

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged

Quoting this report: Jorgoni, Elira (2019). ESPN Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – Albania, European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Brussels: European Commission.

Contents

SUMMARY	4
1. DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION	5
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ALBANIA'S RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TACKLING HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION.....	9
2.1 Strategies and policies	9
2.2 Funding adequacy	12
2.3 Use of EU housing indicators	14
3. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT PATTERNS OF SERVICE PROVISION AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING ALBANIA'S RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION	15
3.1 Effectiveness	16
3.2 Key weaknesses in the provision of housing assistance and key priorities for improvement.....	18
REFERENCES	20
ANNEX	22
Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Albania	22
Table A2: Latest available data on the number of homeless people in Albania	23

Summary

Social housing policy development in Albania has gained momentum during recent years with the approval of the social housing strategy for 2016-2025 and the Law on Social Housing (Law 22/2018). The main goal of the strategy is to make available accessible, affordable and good-quality housing solutions to vulnerable and low-income households. Acknowledging challenges, the strategy commits to expanding social housing programmes through periodic data collection on social housing needs; to improving legislative and regulatory frameworks; and to adapting financial instruments for disadvantaged groups.

Any individual or household is defined as homeless if they either do not own a home or live in an inadequate place of residence or temporary housing, and they cannot afford to buy or rent a home. The law determines eligibility criteria and priority categories of people or households who can access social housing programmes. A major novelty of the law is that it prevents evictions and regulates displacements, which are key concerns expressed in recent Council of Europe reports. Another welcome article in the law is the provision for social housing for victims of violence against women and of domestic violence.

Housing programmes consist of: i) improving the condition of existing houses; ii) providing low-cost housing; iii) developing areas for housing purposes; iv) establishing temporary shelters; v) implementing a programme for specialised housing; and vi) offering subsidised loans, small grants, and immediate grants targeted at specific groups.

The beneficiaries of social housing consist of 15 priority groups: single-parent households, large families, older adults, people with disabilities, young couples, households who have changed residence, orphans, returning emigrants, migrant workers, asylum-seekers, families of fallen officers, victims of domestic violence, the Roma community, the Egyptian community, and recipients of economic assistance. In 2018, some 12,095 households applied to social housing programmes but only 1,545 households (i.e. 12.8% of applicants) benefited from these. The main beneficiaries were people with disabilities (23% of beneficiaries), recipients of economic assistance (17.6%), and Roma households (15.7%). These are also the groups with the highest beneficiary rates per number of applications, by category.

Since 2017, the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) has been in charge of social housing. The National Housing Agency (NHA) focuses on financing, construction, and sales, and allocates low-cost houses to those in the priority categories. Several other central institutions, such as the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, also play a role in the implementation of housing policies.

The new Law on Social Housing gives a particularly important role to municipalities in the provision of social housing services. They are responsible for assessing housing needs, designing mid-term and long-term housing programmes and projects, providing vacant land for construction, and submitting requests to central government for funding, investment, and subsidies. They are in charge of: developing and administering data inventories in relation to social housing; determining the cost of building housing units; building, running, and maintaining social rented housing units; and providing the responsible ministry with information about the performance of housing programmes.

Social housing policies face some significant challenges in different dimensions. First of all, as the secondary legislation is still being drafted, the law is yet to be fully implemented. There are not enough personnel dealing with social housing at both the central and local level, and more financial resources are needed. The low percentage of successful applications for social housing programmes highlights the need for a significant increase in financial allocations for social housing. There were nearly 2.2 times more beneficiaries in 2018 than in 2017; but in order to meet the goal of improving the living conditions of 25,000 households by 2025, an average of 2,983 new beneficiaries per year should be supported between 2019 and 2025. The 2019 budget provides for an increase of 30% in spending on social housing: but although this is the highest level during recent years, it represents only 0.04% of GDP or 0.14% of the total state budget.

Actors, especially those at the local level, lack adequate tools and instruments to collect and analyse data on social housing needs. Monitoring of the implementation of the social housing strategy is still to be carried out, together with an impact evaluation of social housing programmes. Horizontal and vertical coordination need to be improved and, more importantly, a holistic approach to homelessness has to be properly enacted through the coordination of cross-sectoral measures, such as social care services, employment, health, and reintegration policies.

1. Description of the nature and extent of homelessness and housing exclusion

The Law on Social Housing (Law 22/2018) defines as homeless any individual or household who either does not own a home or lives in an inadequate place of residence or temporary housing, and who cannot afford to buy or rent a home (Government of Albania, 2018)¹.

Five of the six ETHOS² Light categories correspond to the homelessness definition in Albania, namely: 1) people living rough; 2) people in emergency accommodation; 3) people living in accommodation for the homeless; 4) people living in institutions; and 5) people living in non-conventional dwellings due to a lack of housing (see Table A1 in the Annex). The sixth category – homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing) – is not included in the definition of homelessness used in Albania, although the family is actually the safety net that provides support for people at risk in the absence of adequate and accessible services. There are no hostels for homeless people in Albania (see living situation 3 in Table A1), while people leaving penal institutions who do not own a house are not targeted by housing programmes. An attempt to summarise the data available from different sources under the ETHOS Light categories is presented in Table A2 (Annex) and described in this Section.

Additionally, reports from 41 (out of 61) municipalities – within the scope of a scoring system used for allocating funds to each municipality – indicate that there were 35,011 homeless households registered in 2017. This number would be considerably higher if all municipalities had shared their information.

The law defines as eligible to benefit from social housing programmes those adults aged 18 and above and in households registered with the local civil registry office who, at the time of applying, fulfil a number of conditions such as: i) living in a dwelling that does not meet basic housing norms (as defined in a decision of the Council of Ministers) and not owning one's dwelling; ii) having become homeless due to a natural disaster, the demolition of dwellings not qualified as housing, an eviction because of public work, an eviction from dwellings excluded from the legalisation processes or an eviction resulting from administrative acts and court decisions; and iii) living in an old dwelling at risk of being demolished. Although, the Law on Social Housing also addresses the needs of those in 'transitional supported accommodation' and 'women's shelter or refuge accommodation', potential beneficiaries are not referred to as homeless but as categories that need to be addressed through housing programmes.

The selection of beneficiaries is based on their living conditions as well as their social and economic circumstances. Two main groups are the focus of social policies: low-income households and vulnerable groups, and middle-income households who are active in the labour market and need further support. 15 social groups are given priority: single-parent households, large families, older adults, people with disabilities, young couples, households who have changed residence, orphans, returning emigrants, migrant workers, asylum-

¹ The law on social housing defines a 'temporary residence' as a dwelling intended for temporary shelter, either as emergency housing for homeless individuals or for others in need of immediate and short-term accommodation, while a sustainable housing solution is found.

² European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion.

seekers, families of fallen officers, victims of domestic violence, the Roma community, the Egyptian community, and recipients of economic assistance.

One of the subsidiary objectives of the national housing strategy for 2016-2025 is to design an electronic system for collecting housing data from the municipalities. This system is expected to be in place in 2020. Until recently, data available from the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) referred mainly to the total number of beneficiaries of social housing, and only identified Roma and Egyptians among the categories benefiting from the housing programmes. Earlier this year, the MoFE issued a request for all municipalities to report on the number of applicants and beneficiaries by categories and housing programme. The data reported are summarised in Table 1. In 2018, 12,095 households applied to social housing programmes, resulting in only 1,545 households benefiting. The main beneficiaries were people with disabilities (23%), recipients of economic assistance (17.6%), and Roma households (15.7%). Households headed by women also had a high number of applications but were not prioritised sufficiently by the housing programmes. However, there was a striking difference between the number of applications and the number of beneficiaries for all the main categories, which highlights the fact that housing needs are largely unmet.

Roma and Egyptians are the categories most in need of housing services. The new law on social housing specifies that at least 5% of social housing programme beneficiaries should belong to these groups. Albanian legislation does not provide a legal status for Roma settlements, and therefore does not recognise the concept of temporary accommodation such as huts and tents. (Xhillari and Cici, 2016). However, there are no reliable and accurate data regarding the size of the Roma and Egyptian populations in Albania. A number of research studies (INSTAT, 2011; UNDP 2013, 2015, 2017) have highlighted the poor housing conditions that the Roma population live in. About 15% of Roma households live in non-conventional dwellings, defined as shelters, tents, shacks, barracks, or any other type of precarious constructions (UNDP, 2015). Census results show a similar situation for the Egyptian community, who share this kind of extreme housing deprivation, often in apartments and in semi-detached or terraced houses (UNDP, 2015). Poor living conditions are also confirmed by the lower proportion of dwellings with access to piped water. Only 48% of Roma dwellings have piped water (see Table 2) compared with 90% of non-Roma households, and only 50% report having toilets, compared with 92% of the non-Roma population (UNDP, 2017c). Access by the marginalised Roma population to the public sewerage system appears to have deteriorated between 2011 and 2017, and the gap vis-à-vis non-Roma living in the same vicinity increased (UNDP, 2017c).

Table 1. Social housing applicants and beneficiaries by category: Albania, 2018

Categories eligible for social housing programmes	No of applicants	No of beneficiaries	Beneficiaries as % applicants	Beneficiaries as % total beneficiaries
People with disabilities	1,210	313	25.9	20.3
Recipients of economic assistance	1,386	272	19.6	17.6
Roma households	480	242	50.4	15.7
Egyptian households	775	118	15.2	7.6
Households headed by women	1,553	124	8.0	8.0
New families (young age)	1,174	22	1.9	1.4
Migrant workers	74	3	4.1	0.2
Asylum-seekers	110	0	0.0	0.0
Victims of domestic violence	91	13	14.3	0.8
Single-parent households	833	76	9.1	4.9
Large households	370	21	5.7	1.4
Seniors	272	56	20.6	3.6
Orphans	183	6	3.3	0.4
Returned emigrants	153	7	4.6	0.5
Family members of fallen officers	4	2	50.0	0.1
Households that have changed their residence	370	83	22.4	5.4
Other groups	2,994	453	15.1	29.3
Total	12,095	1,545	12.8	

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economy (2019).

Note: The total number of beneficiaries (1,545) and applicants (12,095) by category differs as some applicants or beneficiaries may fall under more than one category.

Table 2. Housing conditions of Roma communities: Albania, 2017

	National %	Roma %	Non-Roma %
Access to piped water inside dwelling	72	48	90
Access to public sewerage or waste water tank	N/A	63	74
Access to toilet inside dwelling	89	50	92
Access to electricity	100	84	95
Overcrowding rate	N/A	66	30

Source: Regional Roma Survey 2017 (UNDP, 2017c).

Home-ownership is by far the predominant tenure status in Albania. Most Roma households report owning their house (74%) and a significant minority simply occupy their place of residence without paying rent (16%). The fear of being evicted and of being unable to pay mortgage, rent or utility bills are very common among Roma households. The 2015 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) report raised concern about the housing situation of Roma communities, with a lack of documentation preventing the legalisation of their properties (Council of Europe, 2015). As many as 30% of Roma houses are reportedly not legalised, mostly due to the non-permanent nature of their dwellings and the fact that their settlements are often situated on publicly owned land.

Domestic violence **against women and girls** is a serious issue in Albania and is the crime with the largest number of victims. Over a recent period of 8 years, 106 women and girls were killed as a result of domestic violence, 73 of them by their husbands (INSTAT 2018b).

The 2018 EU accession report on Albania quotes 3,243 reported cases of domestic violence in 2017, and 2,593 court orders issued (European Commission, 2018). According to the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), over 53% (about 750,000) of women and girls in Albania report having experienced domestic violence at least once in their lives. In 2018 alone, 16 women were murdered by their partners, and 4,000 protection orders were issued.

The lack of housing and shelter is one of the biggest challenges for most abused women. Due to a lack of financial means and adequate housing support they remain in abusive relationships. Despite limited shelter capacity, victims of domestic violence often remain in shelters beyond the six-month limit, due to the lack of housing support and inability to pay rent. Although they are eligible for housing programmes, they often turn to their families and relatives for support. A report by a Council of Europe expert group strongly encouraged the authorities to ensure appropriate funding for social services delivered by municipalities in order to support victims of domestic violence and respond to their needs, including their housing needs (GREVIO, 2017). With sexual violence also reaching significant levels – 1 in 4 girls in intimate relationships experience violence during adolescence (AWEN, 2019) – the first shelter for victims of sexual violence opened this year with the support of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Albania.

As summarised in Table A2 in the Annex, there are 360 people aged 18-45 with the **status of an orphan** who live in dormitories across the country. While they can stay in orphanages until they reach the age of 18, after this age the majority of them end up living in dormitories for more than 30 years due to the lack of supported housing.

There are no data on the number of **homeless people with disabilities**. Around 50% of people with disabilities have mental health problems, yet emphasis is mostly placed on individuals with physical disabilities.

Other groups likely to become homeless include **returned migrants, families facing eviction from properties returned to former owners, families living in informal settlements, families in blood feuds**³, and **former prisoners**. However, a more significant housing issue in Albania is the issue of **overcrowding**: i.e. several households living under one roof; households with more than 3 people per room or less than 11m² per person and homes with poor hygienic standards and those at risk of demolition. According to the 2011 Census, less than 6% of households live in a rental apartment and there is extreme overcrowding (dwellings with three or more occupants per room) in 3.74% of the housing stock (INSTAT, 2011).

According to a research study conducted by UNDP Albania (UNDP, 2016) applications for social housing mainly came from **recipients of economic assistance** (3,223), **households headed by women** (2,611), **young couples** (2,598), and **people with disabilities** (2,228). Vulnerable categories with the lowest number of applications for social housing were **asylum-seekers** and **women victims of domestic violence**. The ratio of the number of beneficiaries to the number of applications for all municipalities was lower than 0.7 (UNDP, 2016).

The findings of the same study (UNDP, 2016) indicated differences in the typology of vulnerable applicants for housing programmes. Some municipalities have also identified additional applicant groups such as **former owners** dispossessed by the communist regime (544 applicants in the municipality of Durrës) or **former politically persecuted persons** who enjoy special status (10 applicants in the municipality of Shkodra). There was no information available on these two applicant groups from other municipalities. Other groups mentioned by municipalities, but without reliable data, were people living on the streets and homeless households.

³ Under Albanian customary law. For further information please see: Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2017).

INSTAT expects that the next Census in 2020 will provide a baseline for developing a register of housing and dwellings in the country, which will assist the future planning of housing policies in line with the demographic characteristics of the population. Simplified forms of questionnaires will be used for specific population groups, such as homeless individuals, and people living in collective housing.

2. Description of the Albania's relevant strategies and policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

In 2013 a new ministry was created, focusing exclusively on territorial management. The **Ministry of Urban Development** dealt with the main territorial issues, namely informal settlements and social housing. The National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) was strengthened and serves as the main institution in charge of horizontal and vertical coordination of national and local authorities in order to ensure the appropriate use of the existing housing stock and the use of adequate fiscal instruments.

However, the structural changes in government that took place in 2017 (the dismantlement of the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth) have weakened the leading role of central structures in implementing inclusive and integrated housing and social protection policies. Housing-related functions have been transferred to the biggest ministries – such as the MoFE (for housing structure) and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (for social protection and reintegration functions) – while urban planning has been attached to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. This creates confusion concerning the structures for managing funds and implementing the outputs of housing programmes – while the monitoring role is also not clearly defined and assigned.

The housing directorate at the **MoFE** is responsible for the legal, financial, and institutional policy framework for housing. It is understaffed – there is only the director with four other positions, of which two are currently vacant.

The MoFE drafts the 10-year national strategy and updates its action plan based on local government programmes; plans financial resources; collects information on housing requests at the local level; and maintains a database at national level. Furthermore, the ministry defines the annual average cost for building social houses, determines the distribution of funds, and supervises the realisation of investments.

The **Ministry of Health and Social Protection** is responsible for social protection, inclusion, and reintegration policies for vulnerable communities, such as homeless people among economic assistance beneficiaries, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) people, Roma and Egyptian communities, and migrants, who are also eligible for housing programmes.

2.1 Strategies and policies

While the right to housing is recognised in Albania's constitution (article 59) among other social rights, article 18 on equality ensures the protection of different social groups against any form of discrimination. Both these articles are at the foundation of housing legislation and policies in Albania. Furthermore, the constitution provides that certain international instruments, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to housing, prevail over any unclear domestic legislation (UNDP, 2013).

The **national strategy for development and integration** acknowledges several challenges that relate to the housing situation in Albania (Government of Albania, 2016d). There is a lack of maintenance of buildings and common residential areas and overall insufficient social awareness on public property, compounded by scarce human and financial resources for social housing for vulnerable communities.

Several instruments guide the national policies on housing, such as the national territory plan, the national policy for urban planning and housing, and the national regulation of

urban planning and housing sector. They outline the need for programmes and projects at the national level to increase accessibility and affordability for households in need of housing, and make structural improvements to the housing stock.

The Law on Social Housing, approved in 2018, provides the legal definition of social housing tenure, target groups, subsidies, and eligibility. The law also anticipates linkages between social housing programmes and social services, such as employment, education, and healthcare. A joint instruction defining synergies between programmes is still to be drafted by the relevant ministries.

The law is embedded in the national **strategy for social housing**, which includes a targeted approach to homelessness. Measures are targeted at a number of vulnerable categories outlined in the strategy and defined in the Law on Social Housing. The first national strategy for social housing was drafted in 2016 and covers the period 2016-2025 (Government of Albania, 2016a). It considers social housing as a solution that can take the form of either a rental or home-ownership tenure, provided by local government or the private sector to low- and middle-income households that cannot afford a house in the market, and/or to households unable to access the housing market because of their vulnerability and exclusion.

The main goal of the strategy is to provide accessible, affordable, and good-quality housing solutions to these groups. The objectives of the strategy have been categorised under four strategic lines of action: (1) gathering evidence about social housing and local capacities; (2) improving the legal, institutional, and regulatory frameworks; (3) enhancing financial instruments for disadvantaged groups; and (4) expanding and reorientating social housing programmes.

The strategy identifies a number of challenges: poor evidence about social housing and local capacities; an inadequate legal, institutional, and regulatory framework; limited financial instruments for disadvantaged groups; and the limited reach of social housing programmes among the poorest segments of the population.

The housing programmes include the following: improving the conditions of existing houses; providing low-cost housing; developing areas for housing purposes; establishing temporary shelters; and creating specialised housing. In addition, the government has also established the provision of housing subsidies, subsidised loans, small grants, and immediate grants that are targeted specific groups. However, the reporting on the housing programme and its budgetary execution is tailored around provision of services by types of investment, mainly distinguishing between the Roma and non-Roma population rather than providing more detailed information by types of beneficiaries. Hence, an impact evaluation of these housing programmes is missing.

The implementation of the social housing strategy calls for a coordinated approach with other strategies and documents, in particular with the cross-sector strategy for decentralisation and local governance for 2015-2020 (Government of Albania, 2015c) and the social inclusion policy document (Government of Albania, 2016b).

The cross-sector **strategy for decentralisation and local governance for 2015-2020** establishes that local authorities 'are responsible for urban planning, land management and housing, while committing their funds, state budget, donor funds, public-private partnerships for social housing programmes, low cost housing or land infrastructure'. It reiterates the importance of building on public-private partnerships in order to improve the quality and efficiency of public infrastructure and local assets. At the same time, it outlines the role of municipalities in developing five-year plans for social housing, and planning resources for social housing. There are no recent data available on the number of municipalities that have developed local housing plans. A previous study (UNDP, 2016) revealed that only 9 municipalities had drafted such plans. Some of the challenges mentioned were the lack of staff and capacity to draft this document and a lack of data (UNDP, 2016). Furthermore, the needs assessment that would feed into the housing programme cannot rely only on the number of applications and beneficiaries. Additional steps and resources are needed for the identification of homeless individuals and

households, in particular those hidden cases which often do not have the capacity to apply. Central government is tasked with providing support, in particular for strengthening the capacity of municipalities to manage demand for social housing and the social housing stock itself.

The need to monitor homelessness was also highlighted in the **social inclusion policy document** (Government of Albania, 2016b). The document provided for the introduction of monitoring and measurement systems for social inclusion in several areas, including poverty and social protection, employment and entrepreneurship, education and training, health, basic housing needs, participation, and human rights. A number of indicators were drafted (based on EU indicators of exclusion) for monitoring performance, the legal definition of social housing tenure, target groups, subsidies, and eligibility. However, the proposals in the document have not been implemented.

The **national social protection strategy** for 2015-2020 also highlights the importance of enhancing linkages between services for social assistance beneficiaries – including housing, healthcare, education, and other services supporting their social reintegration (Government of Albania, 2015a). The Ministry of Health and Social Protection is currently conducting a mid-term review of this strategy, which will result in an updated action plan and the extension of the strategy until 2022.

The **national action plan for integrating Roma and Egyptian communities** for 2015-2020 is focused on providing opportunities for these communities in the areas of civic registration and access to justice, employment, social protection, social housing, education, and health (Government of Albania, 2015b). On the policy level, the government commits to improving mechanisms for facilitating legalisation procedures for Roma and Egyptian households, and to include more Roma and Egyptian households in direct and indirect housing programmes. One of the strategic objectives of this action plan is to improve housing conditions for Roma and Egyptians, and by 2020 to ensure that 80% of Roma and Egyptian households who have initiated legalisation procedures have successfully completed them.

The **national action plan for people with disabilities** also makes reference to housing services (Government of Albania, 2016c). The action plan underlines key aspects of the right to adequate housing for people with disabilities, including the physical accessibility of accommodation, housing with support services, provision of social housing, and subsidies. There are currently no housing blocks or units available where people with disabilities can live independently with the assistance of personalised support services.

The Law on Social Housing identifies people with disabilities as a special group to be afforded priority treatment for social housing programmes, for example through rent subsidies and subsidised interest payment schemes. Based on the mid-term review of the action plan for people with disabilities, about 49 individuals from this category have benefited from immediate housing grants from municipalities (Government of Albania, 2019). This exceeds the target set in the action plan for 2017 and 2020, which was 20 individuals each year benefiting from immediate grants. However, looking at the most recent data (Table 1) the number of applications and beneficiaries in respect of housing programmes was significantly higher in 2018 than the targets in the action plan, so that out of 1,210 applicants only 25.9% (313) benefited. In the absence of a baseline for the housing needs of people with disabilities, data from the housing programmes can help in setting more realistic targets in the action plan for people with disabilities as well as the national housing strategy. One of the performance measures in the strategy is also 'coordination between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the local government, for identifying housing and community-based services needed for the de-hospitalisation of people with intellectual disabilities, resident in psychiatric hospitals and placing them in supported houses/apartments'. The government has followed up on this measure by establishing two community-based services for the integration of people with mental illnesses, addressing the housing needs of 20 people. However, according to the action plan for people with disabilities there are 85 people with limited intellectual abilities

who do not need intensive medical treatment, but who are maintained in hospitals due to lack of alternative housing.

2.2 Funding adequacy

The Albanian social housing programmes are based on specific qualification criteria that are targeted at households not only on the basis of their socio-economic conditions, but also on other indicators of vulnerabilities that lead to housing exclusion.

The long-term objective of housing policies in Albania is in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: adequate housing that is close to work opportunities and schools, and is well connected with other social and urban services. Housing policies focus on two main groups: households with low incomes, and those vulnerable households with average incomes that contribute to the economy but require support to access the housing market through either ownership or renting. In the long run, addressing social housing is linked to poverty alleviation, lower unemployment, tackling youth migration, and generally improving the quality of life through both investment and subsidies. Funding for housing is provided by national government and can be complemented by local government budgets. In addition, other state agencies, such as the National Housing Agency (NHA), provide further financing.

Up until 2013 there were only two housing programmes: i) the rented social housing programme, administered in eight municipalities and funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank; and ii) the loan subsidies programme. Beneficiaries of the latter scheme have included public officials such as parliamentarians and government executives/senior managers, raising questions of transparency. Beneficiaries of the loan subsidy programme pay back the cost of their housing over 15-20 years at an interest rate of 0-3%. Between 1993 and 2016, approximately 20,000 households were housed through the loan subsidies programme (Tsenkova and Andoni, 2017).

Between 2014 and 2018, it has been reported⁴ that 1,700 households were supported with rent subsidies, and 1,200 households benefited from investments for the improvement of living conditions. 35% of the investments dedicated to improving the living conditions of poor and vulnerable households went to the Roma and Egyptian communities, and the rest to rural and informal areas. In total, 1,138 social apartments for rent were built, owned by the municipalities. Since 2011, 570 apartments have been constructed as part of the low-cost housing programme. Furthermore, around 4,000 subsidised loans have been issued from the state budget⁵.

Table 3 presents the number of beneficiaries of housing programmes, in total and by main housing programme, for the period 2014-2018. Programmes reached 4,116 households; most of them benefited from investment for improving housing conditions (about 1,806) and the rent bonus programme (1,414) during 2018. The fact that only 12.8% of applicants (out of 12,095) were supported through social housing programmes in 2018 (see Table 1) indicates the need for a significant increase in the budget allocated to social housing. In 2018 there were nearly 2.2 times more beneficiaries than in 2017; but in order to meet the goal in the strategy of improving the living conditions of 25,000 households by 2025, an average of 2,983 new beneficiaries per year should be supported between 2019 and 2025.

⁴ Data from MoFE 2019.

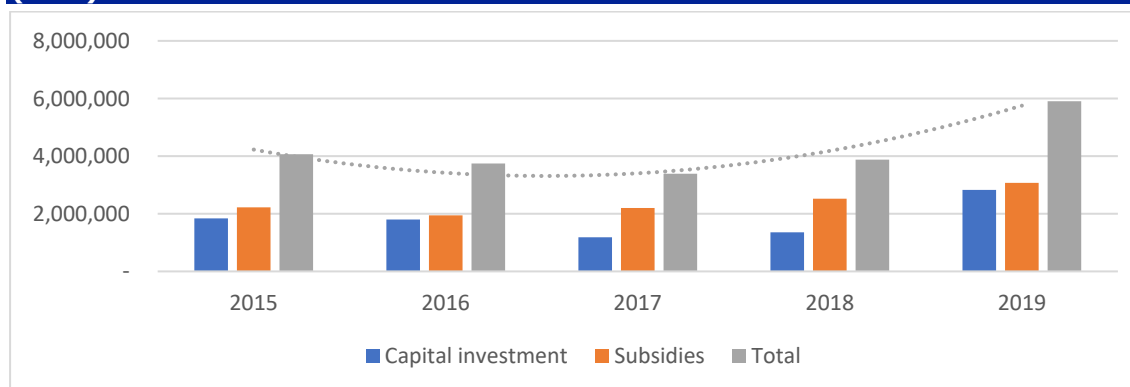
⁵ Minister Denaj: Housing budget for 2019 has increased by 30% (Ministrja Denaj: Buxheti për strehimin në 2019 është rritur me 30%) <https://www.financa.gov.al/ministrja-denaj-buxheti-per-strehimin-ne-2019-eshte-rritur-me-30/> (accessed on May 7, 2019).

Table 3. Number of households benefiting from housing programmes: Albania 2014-2018

Year	Number of beneficiary households by housing programme			
	Investments for improving housing conditions	Subsidised loan	Rent bonus	Total
2014	114	199	N/A	313
2015	225	388	106	719
2016	281	281	262	824
2017	289	13	413	715
2018	897	15	633	1,545
Total	1,806	896	1414	4,116

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economy (2019).

The 2019 budget provides for an increase of 30% in spending on social housing. According to preliminary data from MoFE for 2019, some 2,000 households will benefit from this investment, which would be 700 households above the initial target set for this year; 630 of them will have their houses improved, and the others will benefit from improved infrastructure, mainly in informal settlements. Roma and Egyptian households are expected to represent 32% of the total number of beneficiaries. Projects are to be implemented in the 22 municipalities that submitted successful project proposals. Figure 1 illustrates state funding between 2015, when the social housing strategy was approved, and 2019.

Figure 1. Central government financing of social housing: Albania 2015-2019 (EUR)

Source: Ministry of Finance, author's calculations.

Note: The amounts do not include the contributions from local government and from development partners in projects supporting the housing needs of different communities.

Though the budget for 2019 is higher than in previous years (see Figure 1), it represents just **0.04% of GDP, or 0.14% of the total state budget**. To further illustrate the inadequacy of funding, the cost of measure 5.2 of the strategy (introduction of different subsidies and grants for the housing of low- and middle-income groups in 61 municipalities) has been estimated at EUR 28.2 million (ALL 3,484 million). The amount planned in the medium-term budget programme for 2017-2020 for this measure was around 25% of the budget needed, highlighting the issue of insufficient funding. Therefore, although the 30% increase in the social housing budget in 2019 is promising, the financial allocations remain insufficient to address the strategic goal.

Through the housing programme, the medium-term budget programme 2019-2021 is committed to supporting 3,280 homeless households⁶ with subsidised loans. The rent bonus will be extended from 381 beneficiaries in 2018 to 1,009 in 2021. 1,318 households will benefit from improved living conditions, and 260 households will be supported with rented social housing in adapted buildings. All in all, by 2021, it is expected that 42% of registered homeless households will benefit from this compared with 9% in 2018.

The state budget has allocated ALL 34 million (around EUR 275,000) for 2019 to help 760 poor and vulnerable households to afford the rent in the private housing market. Out of the 760 households who will benefit, 16% belong to the Roma and Egyptian communities.

A scoring system is used for allocating the funds to each municipality. The scoring criteria include: 1) number of beneficiaries; 2) type of project; 3) average income per person in the municipality; 4) cost per family; 5) number of applications per municipality; and 6) contribution of the municipality beyond the 20% requirement. Municipalities that have not provided information, do not report any application, or do not contribute at least 20% of their own budget resources, are not eligible. In 2018, only 30 municipalities out of 61 submitted data on the number of applications for the low-cost housing programme. During 2019, some 2,000 households from these municipalities are likely to be supported.

As mentioned earlier, the national strategy on social housing defines the long-term commitment of the government to support housing and the role of municipalities. While the contribution of municipalities is set as a condition for benefiting from central government funds for housing, it is not clear how municipalities with lower capacity and resources will be considered, nor how service provision to categories of homeless people will be ensured.

2.3 Use of EU housing indicators

The main source of housing data is the Albanian Population and Housing Census. The Census questionnaire includes questions related to housing and family characteristics, such as housing status, ownership, suitability, and affordability. The survey gathers data on housing costs, mortgage or rent payments, ownership, and overcrowding, as well as housing and dwelling conditions. However, other data corresponding to the ETHOS Light categories are not gathered systematically and are only available in different thematic reports.

As outlined in the strategy and planning document drafted by INSTAT (2018c) in preparation for the 2020 Census, the Census will be fully compliant with international recommendations and EU regulations. The new (draft) law on the Census ensures harmonisation with the Law on Official Statistics, EU regulations and the changed territorial and administrative structure of Albania. The 2020 Census will be fully aligned with EU requirements on topics, concepts, definitions, and spatial breakdowns. The data will also help international comparisons by following the requirements of the EU regulations and through dissemination of the data via the EU Census hub (INSTAT 2018c). Indicators linked to housing and dwelling conditions are among the indicators used in various relevant strategies. However, until now only a few⁷ mid-term reviews have been conducted for the strategies and action plans relevant to homelessness and housing exclusion, including the main social housing strategy. Once the results of the 2020 Census are available they will serve as the basis for updating the indicators and monitoring framework under the social housing strategy. Another relevant monitoring framework is the social inclusion policy document, which was drafted in line with the EU definition of exclusion; however, as mentioned earlier, the proposals in this document have not been implemented. As mentioned previously, an electronic system related to housing will be established across

⁶ As per the categories defined in the Law on Social Housing.

⁷ Mid-term reviews have been conducted in 2019 for the action plan for people with disabilities, the strategy for decentralisation, and the strategy for gender equality, while the mid-term review of the social protection strategy is currently being developed.

the 61 municipalities by 2020. However, there is no indication yet of the set of indicators that will be used for this system.

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

The social housing strategy addresses for the first time the need for a holistic approach to homelessness through coordinating cross-sectoral measures, such as social care services, employment, health, and reintegration policies. Depending on the socio-economic profile of the population, housing policies are interlinked with a number of other support measures such as cash assistance (economic assistance for poor households and disability benefits), active labour market and activation measures, access to basic healthcare, education and skills, and access to social services.

Public and non-public actors provide a number of social care services, such as emergency or residential shelters, and residential and day care centres. However, their coverage and capacities remain limited and non-public providers carry the main burden in service provision. Over 70% of social care services are provided by civil society organisations (CSOs), which struggle to sustain the services. Nevertheless, the role of CSOs remains crucial in identifying and referring cases of homelessness, and often also supporting homeless people through the application process. A number of projects supported by the main development partners in Albania, such as Terre des Home, Swiss Contact, GiZ and UNDP, provide support to returned migrants, among other vulnerable groups.

The **NHA** is a semi-private institution under the MoFE. The NHA is one of the housing service providers – focusing on financing, construction, and sales. Through this activity the NHA supports social housing policies and provides a stock of low-cost houses for the categories in need. The NHA also supports the housing of homeless people based on the approved lists of beneficiaries submitted by local government.

The NHA is also engaged in the privatisation of buildings that were not meant for housing purposes, but which have been transformed into housing by their inhabitants. They prepare the whole procedure and documentation for the privatisation, according to the existing regulations. The NHA is also in charge of managing the issue of non-payments.

Local authorities have a key role in service provision, and are responsible for assessing housing needs, designing mid-term and long-term housing programmes and projects, providing vacant land for construction, and submitting requests to central government for funding, investment, and subsidies. Local government is in charge of developing and administering a data inventory in relation to social housing; determining the cost of building housing units; building, running, and maintaining social rented housing units; and making information available to the responsible ministry on the performance of housing programmes. Furthermore, for applicants with low or no income, the local authority is responsible for completing the application files with all the necessary documentation, at its own expense.

Local authorities are tasked with developing five-year programmes and three-year projects for housing, based on available financial sources, housing needs, and the number and type of households that will benefit from different social housing programmes. Furthermore, the local authorities are responsible for administering requests for social housing and determining priority groups. The local housing council approves the scoring system for the assessment of applications, and social administrators verify the financial situation of applicants. However, many municipalities do not offer social housing programmes. The local authority is also responsible for guiding applicants towards programmes for which they are eligible. Applicants can benefit from more than one housing programme at the same time.

CSOs (e.g. non-government organisations, churches, and religious foundations) play a vital role in case referral and service provision, as they run a number of social care services,

including shelters for different categories in need. The social housing strategy underlines the role of CSOs in monitoring the progress of the strategy. According to data from the State Social Service the majority of services (70%) are provided by CSOs. About 90% of services are provided in urban areas, and almost 75% of services are provided in the western and central areas of the country. There are 27 municipalities that do not provide any social care services, including shelters; and almost all municipalities face challenges with regard to service outreach, human and financial resources, quality, and sustainability. Local authorities have the responsibility for drafting social care plans to guide the provision of social services, which also address housing needs, but their planning and delivery capacities are weak. To date, only 34 municipalities have developed social care plans. However, due to limited resources, municipalities have been quite cautious in the range of activities that are planned, as the average funding gap for local social care plans ranges from 30% to almost 70%. The majority of unfunded budget lines are related to national level regulation (i.e. social care staffing), for which municipalities expect central government support. Municipalities seek cooperation with CSOs and donors for financing specific social care services.

Business associations are another important group for the implementation of housing policies. They opposed the new law on housing (in 2018), which obliges construction companies to allocate 3% of the space within new buildings to housing programmes. They were critical about this obligation, arguing that it may have an impact on costs. They have put forward a suggestion that the government should use other funds to support the housing programmes⁸.

However, the requirement for a share of new buildings space to be allocated to housing programmes, and the increased financial contribution from municipalities, can also be highlighted as two innovative measures that were recently introduced in the provision of homelessness services.

INSTAT, though it has no direct role in service provision, helps local government in setting the scoring system at municipal level for the assessment of applications, and supports them with data collection. Municipalities have emphasised (UNDP, 2016) the need for greater transparency in the scoring system, where communities are also included in the process.

3.1 Effectiveness

The strategy for social housing identifies a number of challenges regarding: poor evidence on social housing and local capacities; an inadequate legal, institutional, and regulatory framework; limited financial instruments to support disadvantaged groups; and the limited reach of social housing programmes among the poorest segments of the population.

The social housing strategy and action plan envisage a series of activities related to assessing the situation and needs of the Roma and Egyptian communities. A mapping of the settlements of these communities has also been carried out. The law has also addressed the issues of both eviction and displacement, which now require a decision of the Council of Ministers. Provisions such as temporary shelters help households who have been evicted or displaced. Certain groups of people are eligible for a subsidy of up to 100% of their rent. These include households receiving social assistance or fulfilling the criteria for receiving social assistance, and people who became homeless due to eviction or displacement. The Council of Europe ECRI interim report of 2018 highlights civil society's concern that **people can only obtain rental subsidies if they are registered with the civil registry of the respective municipality. Such a condition directly affects the Roma population, which faces challenges in accessing civil registry services.**

⁸ Business associations against the law for social housing (Shoqatat e biznesit kunder ligjit te strehimit) <https://lapsi.al/2018/06/01/shoqatat-e-biznesit-kunder-ligjit-te-strehimit-social-kostot-do-te-transferohen-te-zytetaret/> (accessed on 6 May 2019).

The **secondary legislation on housing is not ready yet and the housing law is awaiting full implementation**. 35 acts have been identified that need to be drafted, and only 8 of them are ready and currently being consulted on with stakeholders. The finalisation of secondary legislation, promptly and in consultation with key stakeholders, is essential for the effectiveness of the measures foreseen in the legal framework.

Prior to the new Law on Social Housing (Government of Albania, 2018), Albania also lacked legal provisions prohibiting forced evictions. One of the draft decisions that is due to form part of secondary housing legislation is the procedure for evictions, providing support measures for the individuals and households affected. The absence of a clear legal framework, lack of communication, and a perceived lack of transparency on the part of the government, have affected the effectiveness of public investment involving the displacement of households. The draft decision has been prepared and is awaiting approval.

Continual reforms and ever-changing legal frameworks hamper the effective implementation of measures related to housing, social protection, and social reintegration of people at risk. A new law on social care services, approved in November 2016, included some key steps for the reform of social care, such as local social plans, a basket of services at local level, and community-based services. The secondary legislation for this law is also currently being drafted; hence the law cannot yet be fully implemented.

In terms of mandates, in addition to the housing law of 2018, the new laws on social care services (2016) and on local governance (2015) also assign clear responsibilities to municipalities in planning, budgeting for, and providing social housing and care services.

The **formulation of effective social housing policies and programmes is hindered by the lack of systematic data, and as a consequence by the lack of evidence-based analyses**. One of the objectives of the strategy is to establish an electronic platform at the municipal level. The initial target for 2018 has been extended to 2021, indicating that more efforts are required to make it operational. Various research studies (UNDP, 2014, 2016) have concluded that most municipalities gather their data in spreadsheet (Excel) format, whereas there are others that do not use any tools at all. Indeed, information on housing at the local level relies heavily on data for applications.

Local authorities do not gather information on the number of homeless individuals and households, the number of vulnerable groups, and the number of vulnerable groups in need of social housing. Data on individuals and households in need of housing are based on the application of the categories defined in the Law on Social Housing. Although the list of eligible categories is quite wide, there might also be other categories in need of social housing that do not apply and as such remain hidden in the system due to lack of awareness of this programme, inability to prepare and submit an application, and above all the absence of an integrated system of social services and referral mechanisms. Therefore, housing needs remain unmet for a part of population. The lack of data is also one of the main challenges in designing well targeted programmes for providing social housing to people in all the categories in need.

Findings from a survey conducted at municipal level (UNDP, 2016) indicate that **only 9 out of 61 municipalities have designed a housing programme**. The law of 2018 proposed a reduced duration of local housing programmes from 10 to 5 years. The **need for capacity-building and resourced structures dealing with social housing issues remains valid**. The **lack of collaboration** between housing structures such as municipalities, the NHA, and local councils has been highlighted in a number of reports.

In 2016, local authorities dedicated less than 2.5% of their budget to social housing measures (UNDP, 2016). For 2019, the central government contribution to social housing increased by 30% compared with 2018. The MoFE has stressed the need for local authorities to allocate more of their income to social housing, in order to maximise the impact on communities in need. As a follow up, the government stipulated that a condition for state funding for social housing was that the local contribution had to be at least **20% of the total annual income of the municipalities**. Municipalities that contribute beyond

the minimum receive additional points under the scoring system used to allocate funds to municipalities.

With regard to social services, although the responsibilities of local government in managing social care services appear to be clear, the instruments for delivery remain vague and the financial means for the actual establishment and operation of services have not been defined yet. Additionally, the implementation of the de-institutionalisation plan will have implications regarding the housing of people currently living in institutions. Once more this highlights the need for a functional system for providing community-based services, combined with efficient monitoring and the necessary financial and human resources.

Services provided by CSOs are constantly facing financial and sustainability challenges. Services provided through the non-public sector have attempted to fill the gaps in public service provision, and have also introduced new services and models of service delivery differing from the traditional, institutionalised model of public services. However, CSOs are dependent on funding from, and therefore the political agendas of, donors; this has a serious impact on coverage and raises concerns over sustainability. Government contracting of non-government organisations for the provision of social care services and shelters is yet to start, as the financing mechanisms are not clearly defined yet.

Insufficient shelters and the lack of sustainable funding hamper the provision of services for the victims of domestic violence. Financial sustainability remains a common concern and challenge for all non-publicly run shelters. The constant need to engage in fundraising is exhausting and sometimes distracts staff from service provision. The lack funds affects the quality and quantity of services (Sota, 2018).

In Albania, there are no second-stage/transitional housing programmes for women survivors of violence and their children. Women who suffer gender-based violence lack access to the most basic services for their safety and protection. Even where these services are available, they are usually underfunded, understaffed, and mostly available only in major cities (AWEN, 2016).

The shelters available have a capacity of approximately 163 beds in total. Their individual capacity varies from 5 to 50 people. To meet the minimum requirement of the Council of Europe Convention (1 bed for 10,000 inhabitants) Albania should provide 137 additional beds (AWEN, 2016). On the other hand, coverage is another issue of concern regarding shelters. There are only a few of them available, and they are mainly in the biggest cities, with a limited number of beds. Reported cases have increased over the years, and the services available cannot meet the needs of all victims of domestic violence.

A high number of protection orders (4,000) were issued during 2018. However, the major issue related to protection orders remains the fact that the perpetrator lives in the same house. Thus, considerations relating to the scarcity of housing and the low socio-economic status of the perpetrator have at times prevailed over the prime consideration, which should be the victim's safety.

Finally, in 2019 the municipality of Tirana established the first shelter for people living rough, with a capacity of 30 beds (See Table A2 in the Annex). This is the first shelter of this kind in the country. Accurate data on the total number of people under this category are not available yet.

3.2 Key weaknesses in the provision of housing assistance and key priorities for improvement

Lack of reliable data on housing. As argued above, information on housing at the local level relies heavily on data regarding applications for help, as municipalities do not gather additional information on homelessness. Households in need are also referred to housing programmes by municipal social workers or CSOs working with vulnerable communities, or by those running social care services. Municipalities lack standardised and reliable information on the housing market, rent levels, affordability, overcrowding, housing

exclusion, and homelessness. There is no assessment of the impact of social housing programmes on the well-being of beneficiaries.

Limited capacities and resources, at both central and local levels, for dealing with social housing policies. Not all municipalities have a dedicated structure or staff dealing with social housing. Limited capacities at the municipal level to draft, deliver, and monitor social housing services are observed, and only a few municipalities have prepared a housing programme.

Strengthening local capacities for data collection and the management of social housing is one of the goals of the housing strategy. It is imperative to establish a systematic electronic data collection system, and train officials on how to use it as well as how to conduct needs assessments.

Weak inter-sectoral coordination in the face of the multiple social exclusion drivers of homelessness. The needs assessment that would feed in to the housing programme cannot rely only on the number of applications and beneficiaries. Additional steps and resources are needed for the identification of homeless individuals; in particular, the hidden ones that often may not have the information or ability to apply. Central government is tasked with providing support, in particular strengthening the capacities of municipalities to manage demand for social housing and the social housing stock, as well as improving inter-institutional coordination.

Lack of horizontal coordination and a holistic approach to homelessness and exclusion. People in need of housing, especially the most vulnerable groups, also have other underlying causes of exclusion (such as health issues, lack of education and skills, lack of employment, and a need for support services). On the other hand, homelessness or insecure housing puts people at a higher risk of social exclusion. Therefore, housing strategies alone might not be sufficient for some people, and need to be integrated with other social protection support programmes. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen the capacities of public officials at all levels both in terms of numbers as well as technical competency. With several institutions having a stake in drafting and executing housing policies, strong horizontal coordination between the MoFE and other line ministries, as well as with local governments and other service providers, is necessary for their successful implementation.

References

- AWEN (2016), Report on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Albania, Albanian Women Empowerment Network. Available at: <http://awenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Draft-Istanbul-Convention-Monitoring-Report-1-1.pdf>.
- AWEN (2019), Violence in intimate relations in adolescence in Albania, Albanian Women Empowerment Network. Available at: https://awenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Studimi-shqip-DHUNA-NË-MARRËDHËNIET-INTIME-NË-ADOLESHENCË-NË-SHQIPËRI.pdf?fbclid=IwAR24BUuOx0C8iriJLLfbqUQkvFVpbnSwNyYo_YAG74u3J6a3VY_SKFXTks.
- Council of Europe (2015), ECRI Report Albania 2015, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-albania/16808b54ea>.
- Council of Europe (2018), ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Albania Subject to Interim Follow-Up, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/16808b76f0>.
- European Commission (2018), Albania 2018 Report, Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2018) 151. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-albania-report.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2015a), National Strategy for Social Protection 2015-2020.
- Government of Albania (2015b), National Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania, 2015-2020. Available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/download/docs/2015%20Action%20Plan%20Albania%202015%202020.pdf/3e50b7165e9ea151a49dd99c0491ea64.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2015c), National Crosscutting Strategy for Decentralization and Local Governance 2015-2020. Available at: <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/ALB/Decentralisation%20Strategy%20Final%20-%20Feb%202015%20-%20English.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2016a), Social Housing Strategy 2016-2025. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Social%20Housing%20Strategy%20English.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2016b), Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020. Available at: http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/planning_cycle_repository/albania/social_inclusion_policy_document_2016-2020.pdf.
- Government of Albania (2016c), National Action Plan: Persons with Disabilities 2016-2022. Available at: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/PAK%20eng.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2016d), National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020.
- Government of Albania (2016e), National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020. Available at: <https://awenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SKGJB-EN-web.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2018), Law on Social Housing, 22/2018. Available at: <https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ligj-nr.-22-dt.-3.5.2018.pdf>.
- Government of Albania (2019), Mid-Term Review of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

- GREVIO (2017), Baseline Evaluation Report Albania, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-first-baseline-report-on-albania/16807688a7>.
- INSTAT (2011), Census 2011, Institute of Statistics. Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/censet/censusi-i-popullsisë-dhe-banesave>.
- INSTAT (2018a), Crimes and Criminal Justice, Institute of Statistics. Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/crimes-and-criminal-justice>.
- INSTAT (2018b), Women and Men in Albania, Institute of Statistics. Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality>.
- INSTAT (2018c), Strategy and Planning Document for the Albanian Population and Housing Census 2020, Institute of Statistics. Available at: http://www.instat.gov.al/media/5128/2020-census-strategy-and-planning-document_eng.pdf.
- Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2017), Blood Feuds in contemporary Albania: Characterisation, Prevalence and Response by the State. Available at: https://www.cgra.be/sites/default/files/rapporten/blood_feuds_in_contemporary_albania_characterisation_prevalence_and_response_by_the_state.pdf.
- Sota, M. (2018), External Evaluation of the Shelters, commissioned by Iamaneh Swiss.
- Tsenkova, S. and Andoni, D. (2017), Building Partnerships for Social Housing: Growing Housing Needs and Effective Solutions for Albanian Cities, Critical Housing Analysis, 2017, Volume 4, Issue 2.
- UNDP (2013), Housing Policies and Practice for Roma in Albania, United Nations Development Programme.
- UNDP (2014), Social Housing in Albania: A Needs Assessment, United Nations Development Programme. Available at: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/needs-assessment-of-social-housing-in-albania.html>.
- UNDP (2015), Roma and Egyptians in Albania: A socio- demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 Census, United Nations Development Programme. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Census%202011%20Profile%20of%20Roma%20and%20Egyptians%20final.pdf>
- UNDP (2016), Social Housing in Albania: Situation Analysis, United Nations Development Programme.
- UNDP (2017a), Assessment of investments needs in the settlements of Roma and Egyptian Communities, United Nations Development Programme.
- UNDP (2017b), Feasibility Study for improving the housing conditions for vulnerable groups in Tirana Municipality, United Nations Development Programme.
- UNDP (2017c), Regional Roma Survey 2017, United Nations Development Programme. Available at: <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/undp-roma-survey--regional-brief-2017.html>.
- Xhillari, L. and Cici, J. (2016), Social housing and situation of Roma minority in Albania, published at Academic Journal of Business, Administration, Law and Social Sciences, Tirana, Albania. Vol. 2 No 1.

Annex

Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Albania

Operational category		Living situation		Definition	Defined as homeless in Albania
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. In Albanian law, a homeless person is any individual who does not have a house, is living in environments that are not classified as places for living or in temporary housing, and has no means to provide themselves with shelter.
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation	YES (as above)
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	3.3: NO
		4	Temporary accommodation		3.4-3.6: YES. In the Albanian context, this definition is relevant for "temporary accommodation". However, the way the law on social housing is developed, includes also "transitional supported accommodation" and "women's shelter or refuge accommodation", though not referred to as "homeless" but mainly as a housing need. Women's rights to housing are also addressed in the national strategy and action plan for gender equality (Government of Albania, 2016e).
		5	Transitional supported accommodation		
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation		
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing	4.7: YES, as above, not referred to as homeless but as in housing need.
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	8. NO.
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	9. YES
		10	Non-conventional buildings		10. YES
		11	Temporary structures		11. 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	12. NO

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

There are no reliable data on living conditions by reference to the ETHOS typology of homeless people, except for category 10, for which data are gathered through the Census. However, data available through other sources are provided in this Table.

Operational category		Living situation		Most recent number	Period covered	Source
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	N/A	N/A	
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	30 people	2019	For the first time a shelter for people living rough, providing overnight shelter and services for 30 people (20 men and 10 women), was established in Tirana.
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	N/A	N/A	N/A
		4	Temporary accommodation	N/A	N/A	N/A
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	37 families living in emergency shelters	2019	State Social Service (http://www.sherbimisocial.gov.al/qendra-tranzitore-e-emergjencave)
				360 orphans aged 18-45, who live in dormitories across the country	2014	State Social Service
		703 children (aged 0-18) in residential institutions (public and non-public)	2016	Development centres for people with disabilities; shelters for victims of domestic violence; shelters for victims of trafficking. The highest number of children in institutions is in shelters for domestic violence and trafficking (116 children). Data at: http://femijet.gov.al/al/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Vjetar-Statistikor-për-Cështjet-e-të-Drejtave-të-Fëmijëve-20161.pdf .		
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	135 women	2018	State Social Service. The duration of stay in shelters varies from 48 hours to 6 months. There are 2 shelters and 10 emergency shelters for victims of domestic violence, 1 new shelter for victims of sexual violence (2019); 1 shelter for people from LGBTI opened in 2014 and a number of shelter/s for street children.

4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	190 people with disabilities and 480 elderly people	2019	State Social Service
		8	Penal institutions	5,280 people	2019	National prison administration (http://prisonstudies.org/country/albania)
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	N/A	N/A	5.9 and 5.11: N/A
		10	Non-conventional buildings	3,882 households	2011	5.10: INSTAT (2011)
		11	Temporary structures	N/A	N/A	
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	N/A	N/A	N/A

