



# Trends in Homelessness across Europe and their Impact on Health

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Homelessness, Social Exclusion and Health Inequalities

5th March 2014, London

# Trends in homelessness

## ■ Increase in most member states

- Greece
- Italy
- Portugal
- UK

## ■ Changing profiles:

- Youth
- Women and Family
- Migrants
- New Entrants

Impact of the financial and economic crisis vs. structural problems predating the crisis

Impact of the crisis mitigated by integrated strategies and well-developed services

# Responses to the crisis – Budget cuts

- Direct cuts to homeless services

Spain, Greece

- Broader benefits cuts – reducing housing benefits for youth

UK, Denmark

- Local authority budget cuts

Spain

- Neighbouring sectors cuts

social housing in Ireland

# Homeless policies

- Integrated strategies – comprehensive policy framework at national/regional level
- Evidence based approach – data collection
- Housing led approach vs. staircase of transition
- Targeted prevention – evictions, discharge
- Coercive measures – criminalisation
- Social investment approach – European Commission

# EU and Homelessness

## Policy: Social Investment Package (2013)

- framework for policy reforms
- guides MS to use social budgets efficiently and effectively
- life cycle approach
- focus on prevention
- Social investment in homelessness a priority - targeted, integrated, housing led policies on homelessness

# EU and Homelessness

- Funding: Structural Funds to fund local projects to prevent and reduce homelessness
  - European Social Fund – ref to homelessness
  - European Regional Development Funds – transition from institutional to community-based services – DI
  - New: Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived – food, material assistance and social inclusion measures

# EU and Homelessness

- Political level: link social and health policies to the Europe 2020 strategy targets
- Through a cycle of economic policy coordination: European Semester Process
- European Commission publishes Country Specific Recommendations
- In 2013 – no CSR on homelessness, 11 CSR on health, reform of health systems

# Social investment through social innovation

- Social innovation and social experimentation as a key tool to improve the quality and the cost-effectiveness of social policies
- Housing First Europe
- Commission call for social policy experimentation – methodology RCT



# Housing First as Health Intervention

- Origins in US and in health
- Housing stability, but effective in improving health outcomes?
- Beneficial effect on mental health but need more evidence on long-term impact
- Stabilisation of drug and alcohol use
- Limited evidence on physical health

# EU and Health

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Health Programme from 2014 and SIP
  - Investing in Health
    - Sustainable health systems
    - People's health
    - Reducing health inequalities
- Cross-sectoral cooperation

# FEANTSA and Health

- Health WG priorities: peer health work, end of life care for homeless people
- European Network of Homeless Health Workers – newsletters
- Co-operation with European Health Sector  
- EPHA, HOPE, EuroHealthnet



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# Thank you!

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