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# **GOVERNANCE, WORK PROGRAMME AND WAY FORWARD FOR THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM ON COMBATING HOMELESSNESS**

**2022-2024**



In March 2021, the European Commission in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan announced the establishment of a European Platform on Combating Homelessness (hereafter “the Platform”). The Platform was launched in June 2021 via the “**Lisbon Declaration**”, with the aim to trigger dialogue, facilitate mutual learning, improve the evidence base, and strengthen the cooperation among the different stakeholders involved in tackling homelessness in the EU. A Steering Board, chaired by Yves Leterme, guides the work of the Platform.

This note puts forward (1) a governance structure for the Platform, as well as (2) a draft work programme and (3) further details about the funding.

The Members of the Platform are invited to **confirm** their own proposals for actions under this work programme of the Platform and to agree on the Draft Work Programme.

## 1. GOVERNANCE OF THE PLATFORM

**The Platform** is a collaborative effort coordinated and facilitated by the European Commission. It brings together (senior) representatives of Member States, EU institutions and bodies, social partners and civil society (including EU-level representatives of the subnational level), as members of the Platform. Their role as members of the Platform is to:

- Ensure commitment and progress in the fight against homelessness;
- Adopt, further develop and amend the work programme of the Platform;
- Provide the necessary leadership and vision needed to move the fight against homelessness forward;
- Propose, lead on and contribute to the activities of the work programme in their areas of competence.

The Platform is guided by a **Steering Board** that provides guidance, supports the delivery of the work programme’s outputs, as well as ensures oversight of progress in the fight against homelessness. The Steering Board is composed of representatives of EU institutions, of the EU Council Trio of Presidencies, as well as of civil society.

Meetings of the Platform at ministerial level are convened at least every second year by the **incumbent Presidency of the Council of the EU**. The Plenary meetings of the Platform (with MS represented at expert level) shall be convened by each **incumbent Presidency of the Council of the EU, or at the request of the Steering Board**.

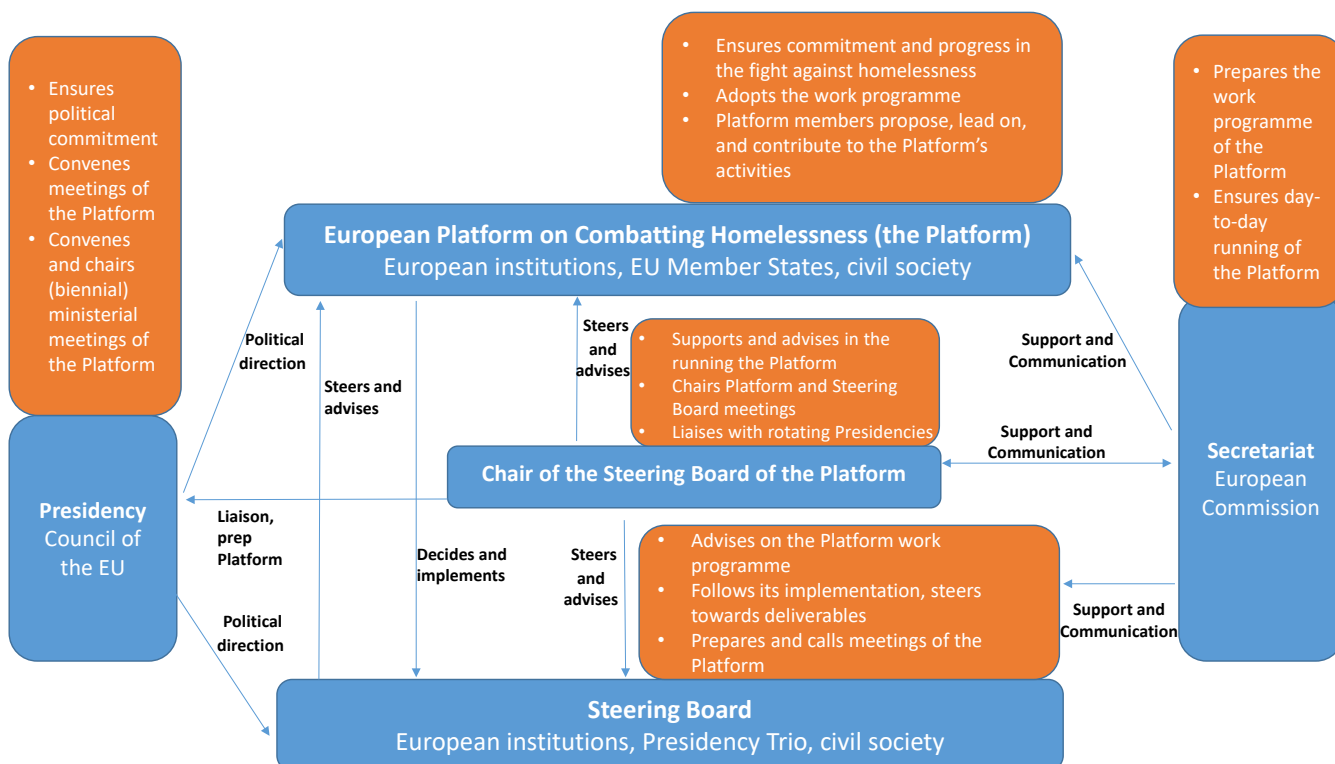
The **Secretariat** of the Platform, which is responsible for managing its daily operation, is arranged for by the Commission.

The **Chair of the Steering Board** has a central role in connecting the Members of the Platform, and ensuring communication amongst them. In particular, the Chair:

- Advocates on behalf of the Platform in order to enhance the visibility of its mission with the Member States and relevant stakeholders
- Liaises with the rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU in setting the political priorities to be discussed at the meetings of the Platform
- Chairs the meetings of the Platform and of the Steering Board
- Steers the discussions in the Steering Board towards agreement on the various topics under discussion
- Provides advice on the work programme of the Platform and its deliverables
- Supports the networking and mutual learning activities of the current work programme

The Platform should always strive to take into account the views of persons who experience or have experienced homelessness.

*Chart 1. Governance of the Homelessness Platform*



## 2. WORK PROGRAMME

**MEMBERS OF THE PLATFORM** are committed to work together towards the ending of homelessness by 2030, by promoting policies based on a person-centred, housing-led and integrated approach, so that:

- no one sleeps rough for lack of accessible, safe and appropriate emergency accommodation;
- no one lives in emergency or transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on to a permanent housing solution;
- no one is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing and support;
- evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution, when needed;
- no one is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.

This approach should be central in all the activities that are developed under the Platform.

In the Lisbon Declaration, the members of the Platform committed to work on concrete deliverables (see boxes in blue below). The present work programme provides details on the concrete actions to be implemented.

### The **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** will:

- **support monitoring of homelessness**, through the European Semester process and the Social Protection Committee, with a view to provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress made,
- **strengthen analytical work and data collection** in order to promote evidence-based policies and initiatives addressing homelessness, by:
  - promoting a **coordinated European-wide counting initiative** (Point in Time Count) about people experiencing homelessness, through the implementation of the Pilot Project proposed by the European Parliament on counting people experiencing homelessness
    - ▶ **European Commission (EC)**, 2022-23
  - **collecting data** on past experience of homelessness, with a view to better understand the drivers of falling into and escaping from homelessness, in the framework of EUROSTAT EU-SILC (every 6 years)
    - ▶ **EC (Eurostat)**, underway, pilot module in 2018, survey in 2023, first results in 2024

- developing a proposal for a **common monitoring framework** on homelessness, agreeing on what should be monitored and how it should be defined and measured, working with the Indicators Sub Group of the Social Protection Committee, building on ETHOS and the various monitoring systems which already exist at national and local levels, with the aim to better understand and assess the extent of homelessness across the EU
  - ▶ **EC** in collaboration with the **OECD** (tbc) and the **Indicator Sub-Group** of the Social Protection Committee, 2022-23

- **support mutual learning of good practices** for combatting homelessness and explore further the implementation of successful existing models, by:

- organizing mutual learning activities and exchanges with Members of the Platform and invited experts, policy-makers and practitioners, with a view to identify and promote evidence-based good practices and solutions.
  - ▶ **EC**, from end 2022 to 2024
- organizing a **European Award** recognizing good practices in combatting homelessness, in its various dimensions
  - ▶ **EC** in partnership with the **European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)**, 2023 onwards
- supporting **evidence-based innovation** in policies addressing homelessness, through a dedicated EaSI-funded call for proposals
  - ▶ **EC**, 2023
- organisation of the EU wide campaign on the need to eradicate homelessness, involving all relevant stakeholders
  - ▶ **EC**, 2024
- **setting up a website** for promoting and sharing good practices of prevention, response and exit of homelessness, including those recognized by the European Award, for sharing information about strategies, projects and research in the area of homelessness, on the basis of the results of the Platform activities (mutual learning, statistics, etc.).
  - ▶ **EC** with Platform members, from 2022 onwards
- **developing a Policy Toolkit** supporting the development of effective homelessness strategies, which will build upon a mapping and assessment of existing strategies, state-of-the-art research, and the results of the various mutual learning events, webinars & exchanges organized under the umbrella of the Platform. This implies the involvement of national authorities, experts and practitioners
  - ▶ **EC**, in partnership with the OECD (tbc), 2022/2023

- **promote the use of EU funding** by the Member States to support inclusive policy measures aiming at combatting homelessness, notably by:
  - **building the capacity of ESF and ERDF managing authorities** so as to improve the take up of EU Funds in support of homelessness policies, including in the framework of the ESF+ Committee and its Technical Working Group<sup>1</sup>
    - ▶ **EC**, ongoing
  - **cooperating with the relevant advisory partners from the InvestEU Advisory Hub** in providing support to the Member States for the design and funding of policy measures addressing housing-led solutions and approaches
    - ▶ **EC**, from 2022 onwards
  - **promoting the use of EU funding by the Member States**, with a focus on ESF and ERDF, to support measures aiming at eradicating homelessness, notably through the forthcoming **“Help Desk on Social Services”**. This Help Desk, which covers a broader scope than homelessness issues, will help Managing Authorities use ESF+, REACT-EU and other relevant EU funds for evidence-based social services intervention and help social services providers access said funds.
    - ▶ **EC**, from 2022
  - inform about **Technical Support Instrument** opportunities to support reforms in national homelessness policies, with a view to promote a person-centred, housing-led and integrated approach
    - ▶ **EC**, timing to be discussed

The **SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE**, together with the **EUROPEAN COMMISSION** will:

- making the knowledge base collected within the SPC available to the Platform
  - ▶ **SPC**, on-going
- contribute to the improvement of statistical and monitoring tools and agree on the way forward
  - ▶ **SPC-Indicators Sub-Group**, with the Commission and OECD (tbc), see above, 2022 onwards
- Review and report on progress made in combatting homelessness, discuss and disseminate the Platform’s findings
  - ▶ **SPC**, 2022 onwards

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<sup>1</sup> The Chair of the Steering Board presented the Platform to the ESF+ Committee on 14 October 2021.

### Other **EU INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES** will:

- take an active part in and **host meetings of the Platform** (European Parliament),
- **promote and support policies aiming at reducing poverty, especially among children and ending homelessness by 2030**, and therefore, building on the actions announced in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, continue to work towards comprehensive European anti-poverty policies, pursuing the UN SDGs and helping achieve the EU 2030 headline poverty target, notably through:
  - the organisation of biennial **conferences on local homeless policies**
    - ▶ **Committee of Regions**, from 2022 onwards
  - the organisation of a **meeting of the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC)** dedicated to homelessness
    - ▶ **Committee of Regions**, tbc
  - the organisation of an **event with social partners and civil society**
    - ▶ **European Economic and Social Committee**, tbc

### **NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES** will:

- promote the **prevention of homelessness, access to permanent housing and the provision of enabling support services to the homeless**, which could, amongst others, be done by:
  - **developing and adopting strategies** for the eradication of homelessness, according to the principles enshrined in the Declaration
    - ▶ **national, regional and local authorities** – ongoing
- **involve all relevant stakeholders** in the design and implementation of these policy measures;
  - encouraging cooperation between them at different levels
- **support policy measures with adequate funding** and, when appropriate, make use of EU funding as a lever to improve the way they address homelessness, notably by:
  - **ensuring that funding opportunities are available for local actors combatting homelessness and providing information on EU funding opportunities** (ESF+, ERDF, RRF), to local authorities, service providers and the third sector
    - ▶ **national authorities in charge of homelessness and EU funds, ongoing/could be further developed in the context of “social innovation and transnational cooperation”**
  - **monitoring and publicising the take up of EU funding** and financing opportunities
    - ▶ **national authorities** in charge of homelessness and EU funds, ongoing



- **share good practices** in combatting homelessness, and the way they can be implemented, notably by:

- organising **mutual learning events webinars & exchanges**, with a view to identify and promote evidence-based good practices among cities
  - ▶ **EUROCITIES**, from 2022 onwards
- **raising awareness/capacity building amongst cities on** delivering housing solutions for the homeless using InvestEU
  - ▶ **EUROCITIES**, from 2022 onwards

### **EU LEVEL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL PARTNERS will:**

- **actively engage their members** in the activities of the Platform, notably by:

- organising FEANTSA's Annual **European conference on homelessness**
  - ▶ **FEANTSA**, from June 2022 onwards
- gathering evidence, and making it available, notably via the European Journal on Homelessness and the annual Overview of Housing Exclusion, and all other relevant sources
  - ▶ **FEANTSA**, from 2022 onwards

- **continue to support their members** in their efforts to combat homelessness and **facilitating mutual learning** and developing evidence on the best ways to end homelessness, by:

- organizing **mutual learning events, webinars and exchanges**, with a view to identify and promote evidence-based good practices
  - ▶ **FEANTSA**, from 2022 onwards
- Exploring the potential of "Housing First" in order to help individuals facing homelessness via the **Housing First Hub Europe conference**
  - ▶ **FEANTSA and the Y-Foundation**, Madrid, 28-29th March 2022
- Promoting the **Red Cross good practices in to Combatting Homelessness in Europe using the Threefold Approach** (prevention, emergency intervention and integration)<sup>2</sup>
  - ▶ **Red Cross**, from 2022 onwards
- Co-organising the **2022 International Social Housing Festival with the City of Helsinki & Finnish Housing Fund** with one of 3 focus themes on the Right to Housing & Homelessness
  - ▶ **Housing Europe in partnership with the European Federation of Public, Social and Cooperative Housing**, 14 – 17 June 2022

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<sup>2</sup> [Report published in January 2022](#)

- Offering **capacity building via working committees, briefings & s/webinars on optimising success of Housing First & optimal collaboration** for prevention of homelessness & maintenance of tenancy & on EU funding available for housing first for housing providers; reviewing the use of EU funds for housing and homelessness.
  - ▶ ***Housing Europe in partnership with the European Federation of Public, Social and Cooperative Housing***, on-going
- Offering seminars in collaboration with **FEANTSA & Abbé Pierre via the Housing Solutions Platform** focusing on the identification of local best practices;
  - ▶ ***Housing Europe in partnership with The European Federation of Public, Social and Cooperative Housing***, on-going
- **Build capacity** through exchange to enable National Federations of housing providers, Members of Housing Europe are included in the **preparation of national strategies to tackle homelessness**.
  - ▶ ***Housing Europe in partnership with The European Federation of Public, Social and Cooperative Housing***, on-going;
- Looking into **the role of the social economy actors**, such as not for profit social service providers, in preventing, reducing and addressing both housing shortages and the situation of people who experience homelessness
  - ▶ ***Social Economy Europe***, from 2022 onwards
- Offering webinars/workshops on **understanding LGBTI homelessness** and cooperating with authorities and homelessness providers in developing inclusive and safe and accessible offers for LGBTI homeless people
  - ▶ ***> ILGA – Europe***, from 2022 onwards
- Inviting all members of the Platform to participate in the **European Social Services Conference and inclusion of a chapter on homelessness**
  - ▶ ***> European Social Network (ESN)***, every year
- Sharing **good practices on minimum income schemes and integrated social services with a focus on accessing minimum income** by the most vulnerable, including people in homelessness situations or at risk of becoming homeless
  - ▶ ***> European Social Network (ESN)***, in 2022

The **PRESIDENCIES OF THE COUNCIL** will:

- **convene and chair at least every second year Ministerial meetings** of the Platform; convene on a regular basis additional meetings of the Platform.
  - Ministerial event under the **ongoing presidency** (28 February 2022)

- **support the efforts of all stakeholders**, including non-governmental organisations, to combat homelessness.

### **3. FUNDING OF THE PLATFORM**

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts under the 2022 Annual Work Programme of the EaSI strand of ESF+ amounts to EUR 48 718 305. This includes funding for analytical activities (research, policy advice), mutual learning, and exchange of good practices in the field of homelessness. In addition, the annual operating grants to support EU level Social NGO Networks prioritise, among others, housing and assistance for the homeless. Moreover, a contribution agreement with OECD will provide analysis and in particular develop indicators monitoring access to good quality, affordable housing, as well as the issues of homelessness and housing exclusion in EU MS.

The 2022 EU budget is due to include a €990,500 allocation for the European Homelessness Count (EUHC) pilot project. EUHC aims to stimulate the regular collection of data on homelessness at local level.

Other funding opportunities (ESF+, ERDF, Technical Support Instrument, InvestEU Advisory services, etc.) can also be mobilised as mentioned above. Public authorities and stakeholders are also expected to use their own resources to combat homelessness in Europe.

