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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion, including homelessness

Delegations will find attached the Council Recommendation on the above subject approved by the EPSCO Council at its meeting held on 19 October 2026.

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ANNEX

2026/0105 (NLE)

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on fighting housing exclusion, including homelessness

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292, in conjunction with Article 153(1), point (j), thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) Pursuant to Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, the Union shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and promote social justice and protection. Pursuant to Article 151 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Union and the Member States have as their objectives, amongst others, the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, proper social protection and the combating of exclusion.

(2) Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union sets out the recognition and respect for the right to social and housing assistance to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the rules laid down by Union law and national laws and practices.

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(3) Article 31 of the European Social Charter (revised)[1] confirms the commitment of all parties to promote access to housing of an adequate standard, to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination and to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources.

(4) In November 2017, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights[2]. Principle 19 states that access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality and protection against forced eviction shall be provided for those in need. It also states that adequate shelter and services are to be provided to the homeless to promote their social inclusion.

(5) In line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 establishing a European Child Guarantee[3] calls on Member States to ensure, among other things, effective access for children in need to adequate housing, with specific attention to preventing and addressing homelessness among children and families. The Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion[4] recommends combining adequate income support, inclusive labour markets, and access to enabling and essential services, including housing. The Council Recommendation of 27 November 2023 on developing social economy framework conditions[5] calls on Member States to acknowledge and support the role of the social economy in providing accessible and high-quality social and care services and housing, also taking into consideration disadvantaged groups, in close cooperation with publicly available social services.

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1 https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=163.
2 Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights.
3 Council Recommendation of 14 June 2021 on establishing a European Child Guarantee (OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14).
4 Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (OJ C 41, 3.2.2023, p. 1).
5 Council Recommendation of 27 November 2023 on developing social economy framework conditions (OJ C, C/2023/1344, 29.11.2023).

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(6) The Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030[6] stresses that women are particularly affected by precarious housing situations as they are overrepresented among single parents, older people and victims of gender-based violence. Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence[7] calls on Member States to ensure, among other things, that support services provide victims with information and support on access to housing.

(7) Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation[8] calls on Member States to ensure equal treatment of Roma people in access to, among other things, adequate desegregated housing and essential services.[9] The LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030[10] stresses that discrimination and a lack of social acceptance contribute to high levels of poverty and homelessness among LGBTIQ+ people. In the Communication "Enhancing the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities until 2030", the Commission calls for ensuring access to affordable and accessible housing for persons with disabilities, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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6 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM/2026/113 final: Gender Equality Strategy 2026 - 2030.

7 Directive 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence (OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024).

8 Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation (OJ C 93, 19.3.2021, p. 1).

9 Complemented by Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation COM/2020/620 final.

10 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026–2030*, COM(2025) 725 final,

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(8) Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on access to affordable high-quality long-term care[11] recommends that Member States develop and/or improve formal long-term care services, especially home and community-based care. Housing that is adapted to an individual's needs for evolving care is a fundamental prerequisite for ageing in place, enabling the provision of home-based care and helping to avoid unnecessary recourse to residential care.

(9) Directive 2024/1346/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection[12] stipulates that applicants for international protection are entitled to material reception conditions which include housing, food, clothing, personal hygiene products and a daily expenses allowance, with harmonised standards across the EU.

(10) Directive 2014/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features[13] ("the Payment Accounts Directive") states in Article 16(2) that Member States shall ensure that consumers legally resident in the Union, including consumers with no fixed address, have the right to open and use a payment account with basic features with credit institutions located in their territory. Such a right shall apply irrespective of the consumer's place of residence.

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[11] Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on access to affordable high-quality long-term care (OJ C 476, 15.12.2022, p. 1).

[12] Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (OJ L 2024/1346, 22.5.2024)

[13] Directive 2014/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features (OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 214).

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(11) The Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness[14] was signed on 21 June 2021 by EU institutions, Member States, social partners and civil society organisations. It commits all its signatories to launch a European Platform on Combatting Homelessness to promote the design and implementation of person-centred, housing-led and integrated approaches and to work towards ending homelessness in the European Union by 2030, so that:

(i) no one sleeps rough for lack of accessible, safe and appropriate emergency accommodation;

(ii) no one lives in emergency or transitional accommodation longer than is required for a successful move onto a permanent housing solution;

(iii) no one is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing;

(iv) evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution, when needed;

(v) no one is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.

(12) The European Platform on Combatting Homelessness is the established cooperation framework at EU level on homelessness. It provides a collaborative forum for knowledge building, mutual learning, and cooperation among Member States and stakeholders, contributing to evidence-based policymaking and stronger implementation capacity, including in relation to preventing and addressing housing exclusion.

[14] Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (21 June 2021, Lisbon, Portugal).

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(13) The “La Hulpe Declaration”[15], signed on 16 April 2024 at the High-Level Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights, acknowledges that homelessness remains an issue in many Member States and calls for continued action on accessible, efficient, green and affordable social housing to meet the housing needs of all, to eradicate homelessness and to promote a “Housing First” approach. The Declaration also acknowledges the importance of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness.

(14) In its Resolution adopted on 24 November 2020[16], the European Parliament stressed that housing is a fundamental human right and called for stronger action from the Commission and Member States to end homelessness in the EU by 2030. In its Resolution adopted on 10 March 2026[17], the European Parliament underlined the need for a European approach and solutions to ensure the availability of decent and affordable housing and called on Member States to develop and implement housing-led strategies to reduce homelessness. The Resolution also calls on the Commission to provide policy support to tackle homelessness and to monitor progress in this regard.

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[15] La Hulpe Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights (16 April 2024, La Hulpe, Belgium).

[16] European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU (2020/2802(RSP)).

[17] European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2026 on the housing crisis in the European Union with the aim of proposing solutions for decent, sustainable and affordable housing (2025/2070(INI))

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(15) The Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/543 of 22 March 2017[18] laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns**,** sets out the statistical definitions in relation to homelessness and is applicable until the end of 2027. From 2028 onwards, Regulation (EU) 2025/2458 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2025**[19]** on European statistics on population and housing provides the new legal framework for these definitions and foresees, inter alia, pilot and feasibility studies.

(16) In its Opinion on eradicating homelessness in the European Union[20], adopted on 2 December 2021, the European Committee of the Regions welcomed the launch of the Platform and underlined four important strands of action for it, namely mutual learning, promoting access to funding, data collection and policy monitoring, and identifying and helping to upscale promising innovations.

(17) In its Opinion for an EU framework for national homeless strategies based on the principle of "Housing First"[21], adopted on 13 December 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee called for the development of an EU homelessness strategy, making it possible to include national policies to combat homelessness in the European Semester. It also suggested that this strategy should be underpinned by a Council Recommendation on homelessness.

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18 Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/543 of 22 March 2017 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns (OJ L 78, 23.3.2017, p. 13)

19 Regulation 2025/2458 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2025 on European statistics on population and housing, amending Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 763/2008 and (EU) No 1260/2013 (OJ L, 2025/2458, 12.12.2025)

20 Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions - Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: the local and regional perspective (OJ C 97, 28.2.2022, p. 26).

21 Opinion EESC 2023/01741of the European Economic and Social Committee on For an EU framework for national homeless strategies based on the principle of 'Housing First'

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(18) The 2026 Joint Employment Report[22] notes that Member States should take action to support access to affordable housing, social housing or adequate housing assistance, where appropriate, prevent and tackle homelessness as the most extreme form of poverty, address social exclusion through integrated, person-centred and housing-led strategic approaches and promote the renovation of residential and social housing.

(19) The European Affordable Housing Plan[23] adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2025, recognises that some groups are disproportionately impacted by rising housing costs and limited access to social and affordable homes, and that homelessness is a persistent and complex challenge to be addressed through housing-led solutions, such as the 'Housing First' approach, accompanied by integrated approaches to combat poverty and exclusion.

(20) The first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy adopted by the Commission on 6 May 2026, identifies housing prices as a particular challenge for those experiencing or at risk of poverty and notes that access to affordable, sustainable and quality housing is a vital prerequisite for integration in society and into the labour market.

(21) The 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 11 call for ending extreme poverty, including homelessness, everywhere, and ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing.

(22) Homelessness remains the most extreme and visible manifestation of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union. It affects individuals and families across all Member States, and undermines the principles of dignity, equality, and social justice on which the Union is founded. Despite the efforts made to date, homelessness is on the rise in several Member States and it is estimated to affect more than one million people[24].

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[22] European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Joint employment report 2026 – As adopted by the EPSCO Council on 9 March 2026, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026.

[23] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM/2025/1025 final: The European Affordable Housing Plan

[24] OECD Affordable Housing Database | OECD

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(23) Housing exclusion refers to the inability of an individual or household to access or maintain decent, stable housing that meets basic standards of safety, legal security, accessibility and affordability. Homelessness is its most visible and extreme form, and it includes people sleeping rough and in emergency and temporary accommodation for the homeless. However, housing exclusion is broader and includes those who have a roof over their heads but live in conditions that are inadequate or insecure. Insecure housing occurs when individuals encounter threats of eviction, domestic abuse, or hold unstable tenancy agreements. Inadequate housing occurs when individuals occupy dwellings of sub-standard quality that lack basic facilities (such as indoor flushing toilets or washing facilities). These dwellings can be in very poor conditions, in a severely overcrowded situation or not adapted to people with additional needs (such as older people, persons with disabilities and persons with long-term care needs).

(24) Housing is a key social determinant of health, social inclusion and a cohesive society, and a lack of housing, poor-quality housing or living in segregated residential environments can be detrimental to quality of life, including mental and physical health, well-being, employment and educational opportunities of individuals and communities.

(25) Housing exclusion and homelessness are driven by a complex interaction of structural, institutional and personal factors. These include poverty, unemployment, a lack of social and affordable housing or housing assistance of good quality, discrimination, poor mental and physical health, substance abuse and domestic violence.

(26) In the Union, in 2024, nearly 6% of people aged 16 years or over who were looking for housing in the last 5 years reported that they had felt discriminated against at least once. The share of those who felt discriminated against was twice as high for people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (10%) compared with those not at risk (5%). Around 17% of the Union population in 2024 were living in an overcrowded home.

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(27) The shortage of social and affordable housing is a major obstacle in the fight against housing exclusion and homelessness. Between 2013 and 2024, house prices in nominal terms increased by more than 60% across the Union, growing faster than household income, with a number of Member States experiencing average increases of more than 220% in nominal prices. At the same time, average rents have risen by around 20% while, in general, new rental contracts are significantly more expensive than the older ones, especially in urban and touristic areas. Housing costs, including water, electricity, heating and cooling, gas and other fuels, have increased in 17 Member States, compared to the Union average, with an increase of up to more than 80% above the EU average in some Member States, and decreased in 10 other Member States.

(28) Housing supply has faced challenges in keeping pace with rising demand due to, inter alia, high construction costs, innovation deficits, shortages of skilled labour, migration and excessive red tape. In particular, construction prices in the Union have risen by 56% between 2010 and 2024, with some Member States seeing increases of more than 170%. Residential building permits (number of dwellings) have fallen by 22% between 2021 and 2024 and the existing housing stock has not been used to its full potential, with around 20% of dwellings across the EU remaining vacant or underoccupied (including seasonal or secondary residences and housing units purchased as investments and not used as primary residences).

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(29) In this context, increasing the supply of social and affordable housing is a crucial element in addressing housing exclusion. In particular, further investments are needed to support the construction of new dwellings, renovation, and when possible, using the existing underoccupied and unoccupied dwellings more efficiently, including through incentivising renting private owned properties, repurposing of existing building stock e.g. of office buildings. The revision of State aid rules on Services of General Economic Interest as part of the European Affordable Housing Plan and the Mid-term Regulation for the review of the EU Cohesion policy funds[25] contribute to developing an enabling framework for investments in social and affordable housing (by March 2026 at least EUR 3.3 billion was reallocated by the Member States and regions to affordable and sustainable housing under the mid-term review). The mid-term regulatory flexibilities and the possibility for a higher Union co-financing rate for housing investments remain available to support further reprogramming until 2029-2030.

(30) In line with the principles of the New European Bauhaus, access to adequate, sustainable, affordable and quality housing should be considered part of a broader social and territorial ecosystem that supports inclusion, community life, labour mobility, access to education and training, health, long-term care, independent living and social cohesion. Housing policies are more effective and create an added social value where they are combined with place-based measures, community infrastructure and services, and designed to promote inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods that meet the needs of the inhabitants.

[25] Regulation 2025/1914 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2025 amending Regulations 2021/1058 and 2021/1056 as regards specific measures to address strategic challenges in the context of the mid-term review (OJ L, 2025/1914, 19.9.2025),

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(31) To expand supply and affordability, Member States, depending on national circumstances, can take advantage of different housing models, including social and public housing, cost-rental and limited-profit housing, housing cooperatives, social rental agencies and other non-profit or public-interest models. These models, often delivered by social economy organisations, can contribute to long-term affordability, reduce exposure to harmful speculation and help make better use of existing dwellings, land and investment resources. Innovative cohabitation concepts, including intergenerational living, co-housing and shared-space arrangements, can also help address challenges related to social isolation, under-occupation of buildings and local housing shortages. Mutual learning can help to identify successful models already implemented in other Member States.

(32) Housing systems may differ across Member States. Social housing has strong merits as an instrument in many Member States, while in other Member States, alternative systems are used. In addition, concepts such as social housing and affordable housing are understood in different ways across Member States, reflecting national circumstances and institutional frameworks.

(33) Scaling up social and affordable housing supply requires stable governance and investment frameworks, including public-private partnerships, public-interest partnerships, and new, extended public-private-people partnerships (focused on the integration of potential residents). The cooperation between public authorities, social economy organisations, social and affordable housing providers, private housing developers, educational institutions, employers, financial institutions and other stakeholders is important. Blended finance, cost-based rent, revolving funds, public guarantees, long-term leases on public land and other public-interest financing mechanisms can help mobilise patient capital and facilitate long-term affordability. In addition, Member States can also promote and support innovative and inclusive bottom-up housing projects, where future residents plan and finance their housing project collectively.

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(34) Housing exclusion and homelessness may disproportionately affect certain populations, with the scale and composition of those affected varying significantly depending on national, regional and local circumstances. Certain people and groups may face particular and overlapping disadvantages in accessing housing and a higher risk of housing exclusion or homelessness. These may include young people (such as students unable to afford or access student housing, or those leaving institutional or alternative care), unemployed people, people experiencing in-work poverty, vulnerable families (including single parents and larger families with children), victims and survivors of gender-based violence, older people in precarious housing situations, persons with disabilities and persons with long-term care needs, Roma, people with a migrant background, people belonging to racial or ethnic minorities and LGBTIQ+ people.

(35) Prevention of housing exclusion and homelessness, combined with access to adequate and secure housing, and comprehensive, person-centred support services, such as integrated social services, are some of the most effective tools for ending homelessness. Member States should be invited to strengthen prevention policies which encompass universal prevention measures, upstream interventions targeting high-risk populations, crisis prevention for persons and households facing imminent homelessness and emergency-stage interventions to ensure timely access to temporary accommodation.

(36) Early intervention tools such as rent and mortgages arrears mediation, debt counselling, legal assistance concerning tenants' and landlords' rights, early-warning systems, and short-term financial support are not consistently available across Member States, and strengthening these mechanisms is essential to preventing housing exclusion effectively.

(37) Preventing forced evictions[26] and providing support during relocations requires a fair legal framework for tenants' security, housing stability, and landlords' rights. Cooperation with local authorities, social services, and mediation options, including social rental agencies, can reduce the risk of homelessness and ease transitions.

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[26] "forced evictions" as defined by the UNHCR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 7 (1997) on "The right to adequate housing: forced evictions" (20/05/97)

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(38) Housing-led approaches, including the Housing First model, which combine rapid access to long-term and secure housing with personalised and integrated support services, including social, health and employment supports tailored to individual needs, have demonstrated sustainable positive outcomes in preventing and reducing housing exclusion and homelessness and promoting social and economic integration.

(39) Administrative requirements for accessing assistance, including the obligation to provide proof of permanent residence, may create barriers for people experiencing homelessness or housing exclusion. Removing or adapting such requirements, where appropriate, can improve the take-up of available support and help tackle the root causes of housing exclusion.

(40) Rising housing costs and limited access to social and affordable housing can hinder labour market mobility, as individuals may be unable to move to areas where employment opportunities are available. This can affect competitiveness and economic growth. Addressing housing affordability and availability is a crucial part of supporting labour market participation and ensuring the efficient functioning of labour markets.

(41) Differences in definitions, monitoring systems and data collection methodologies used across Member States limit the availability of comparable data on homelessness at Union level.

(42) Reliable, relevant, and regularly collected data and statistical evidence on housing exclusion and homelessness are crucial for effective policy design, monitoring, and evaluation, which help to assess progress without increasing administrative burden.

(43) Tackling housing exclusion and homelessness requires cross-sectoral coordination and multi-level governance involving the European Union, national, regional and local levels, alongside civil society, social economy organisations, housing providers, and people with lived experience of homelessness.

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(44) Partnerships with organisations offering support to people experiencing homelessness and people facing housing exclusion more broadly can strengthen public efforts to offer services that foster social inclusion and create stable housing solutions for specific target groups. By providing additional services such as work integration, social economy organisations can help ensure a transition to a stable life.

(45) Effective action to prevent and reduce housing exclusion requires adequate and stable funding, as well as the efficient use and coordination of available Union, national, regional, and local financial resources, in accordance with Member States' competences and budgetary frameworks.

(46) 'ETHOS', the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, was developed as a framework to improve understanding and measurement of homelessness in Europe, and to provide a common "language" for transnational exchanges on homelessness. ETHOS classifies living situations that amount to forms of homelessness and housing exclusion, namely:

– rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough),

– houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter),

– living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence, living temporarily with family/friends),

– living in inadequate housing (in temporary or non-conventional structures, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).

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HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION

SUBJECT MATTER

(1) Without prejudice to the national competences of the Member States, this Recommendation provides guidance on combating social exclusion, and in particular:

(a) on supporting Member States in preventing and addressing housing exclusion, and in particular homelessness;

(b) on promoting the design, implementation and improvement of national, regional and local strategic frameworks based on person-centred, housing-led and integrated policies.

DEFINITIONS

(2) For the purpose of this Recommendation, the following definitions apply:

(a) ‘housing exclusion’ means situations in which individuals or households lack access to adequate and/or secure housing. It encompasses notably people experiencing homelessness (i.e. rooflessness or houselessness) and those living involuntarily in precarious housing situations, such as in inadequate or insecure housing;

(b) ‘emergency accommodation’ means accommodation, such as night shelters, whose primary purpose is to address an urgent need for shelters and access to basic facilities;

(c) ‘temporary accommodation’ means time-limited housing that is provided while a long-term and secure housing solution is being sought for;

(d) ‘housing-led approaches’ means policy and service delivery models that prioritise the provision of rapid access to adequate, affordable, long-term and secure housing, accompanied, where necessary, by integrated, person-centred support services for housing stability and social inclusion, such as Housing First.

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CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

(3) Member States are recommended to:

(a) adopt, revise or build on existing national and regional strategic frameworks on fighting housing exclusion and homelessness on the basis of person-centred, housing-led and integrated policies in line with this Recommendation, with a view to reinforcing efforts towards ending homelessness in the European Union. This should be done with the involvement and participation of regional and local authorities, and other relevant partners, while respecting the distribution of competences within Member States;

(b) define, with respect to national contexts, precarious housing situations, in particular taking into account poverty or social exclusion risks;

(c) develop tailored measures to fight housing exclusion and homelessness, and adopt a person-centred, housing-led approach drawing, where appropriate, on the principles of Housing First and the New European Bauhaus, including participatory, place-based and inclusive design, with the provision of integrated services like social assistance, healthcare, long-term care and labour market activation, combined with housing assistance;

(d) set relevant, time-bound, achievable and measurable objectives in line with the Lisbon Declaration, including the following:

(i) every person sleeping rough (those in 'primary homelessness'[27], sleeping in the streets without taking shelter in any living quarters) receives an offer of emergency accommodation;

[27] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/543 of 22 March 2017 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns (OJ L 78, 23.3.2017, p. 13).

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(ii) people living in emergency or temporary accommodation (those in ‘secondary homelessness’) or persons discharged from any institution receive effective support to access long-term and secure housing solutions as soon as possible.

IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOUSING EXCLUSION

(4) Member States are recommended to:

(a) strengthen data collection and permanent monitoring mechanisms on hard-to-reach groups, including people experiencing homelessness, and, without excessive administrative burden, develop regular, comprehensive, comparable data, including, where possible and without disproportionate burden and costs for Member States, disaggregated statistics on housing exclusion and homelessness at national, regional and local levels, while respecting data protection rules and where possible by making use of existing data sources;

(b) align criteria for identifying people experiencing or at risk of housing exclusion, across relevant services, such as social, employment, education, justice, and child protection services, and build up rapid, effective and timely information-sharing between these services;

(c) consider developing or improving early-warning systems to identify households at risk of housing exclusion, ensuring timely outreach and prevention support; quantify and assess the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness and those in precarious housing situations; develop tailored identification strategies for those frequently undercounted or hidden.

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PREVENTION OF HOUSING EXCLUSION

(5) Member States are recommended to:

(a) support, in their strategic frameworks, those at risk of housing exclusion to retain adequate housing through targeted measures such as debt and housing counselling, early-warning systems, emergency rental assistance, mediation, and other mitigation actions such as addressing energy poverty. Ensure the availability of adapted housing, as well as accessibility and reasonable accommodation, for persons with disabilities or long-term care needs, while avoiding disproportionate burdens on construction and renovation;

(b) ensure timely and effective access to information, especially for people at risk of housing exclusion, on available housing, social and income support measures, and homelessness assistance, including by providing information in accessible formats, and consider conducting outreach to reduce non-take-up of entitlements;

(c) regularly monitor and, where necessary, assess the adequacy of income support, including housing-related allowances, in relation to housing costs, for instance with adjustment mechanisms responsive to cost trends. While assessing adequacy it is necessary to consider the need to avoid poverty traps;

(d) establish mechanisms, where relevant, to prevent evictions through early and systematic interventions by social services, competent judicial authorities and other related services. Such measures may include intensive support for persons at risk of eviction in managing rent arrears and, where eviction cannot be avoided, active assistance in finding an alternative rehousing solution tailored to the needs of the person or household concerned;

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(e) strengthen preventive measures and safeguards in relation to forced evictions, particularly for families with children, with special attention to single-parent households. Member States should ensure transparent, timely procedures respecting proportionality, due process and effective remedies, while respecting landlords' rights;

(f) ensure that no child lacks adequate housing, guaranteeing timely and suitable alternative accommodation when needed, while preserving family unity in the child's best interest;

(g) ensure that no child or young adult leaves institutional or foster care without adequate housing, comprehensive support services, including financial support and preparation programmes to assist them in transitioning out of care;

(h) put in place early preventive counselling in educational establishments, building, where appropriate, on existing educational guidance services, as well as in work or youth institutional settings, to help detect situations of distress, prevent early school leaving, and facilitate appropriate referrals to the competent services and prevent housing exclusion among children and young people;

(i) make counselling and social support available for older persons and persons with disabilities to prevent housing exclusion;

(j) ensure equal treatment of people at risk of discrimination in access to adequate housing and essential services across all housing tenures;

(k) provide timely, personalised support for people leaving institutions, such as prisons, hospitals, accommodation centres for applicants for international protection, and care facilities to secure long-term housing. This includes people with significant mental health, substance abuse or long-term care needs. To this end, Member States could encourage cross-sectoral discharge protocols involving the competent public authorities and relevant service providers, and enhanced support measures aimed at preventing any disruption in care pathways.

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SUPPORT TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

(6) To reduce the length of time that people experience homelessness or rely on emergency or temporary accommodation, Member States are recommended to provide person-centred, integrated and accessible support through:

(a) accessible and inclusive support systems, including, for example, individual needs assessment, tailored support plans, specific support functions (such as case managers and housing advisors) and case management for the most complex cases; outreach and community-based multi-disciplinary teams involving health and care professionals, social workers and food banks. Outreach teams could also provide information and guidance to help with access to rights, essential services, civil registration and documentation, education and labour market integration;

(b) ensuring that any public order measures relating to public spaces respect the dignity and fundamental rights of people experiencing homelessness;

(c) standards ensuring consistent, high-quality support services, including child-specific support;

(d) a ‘one-stop-shop approach’ with timely, simplified referrals to relevant social security agencies, social assistance, and low-barrier social and health services;

(e) support systems helping prevent unnecessary family separation, in the best interests of the child and ensuring that no child remains roofless or in emergency shelters, temporary accommodation or other forms of houselessness;

(f) active employment support, including by facilitating registration with the employment services, and developing personalised pathways to employment, social and job-retention support and support for employers;

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(g) ensuring that people experiencing homelessness are informed of their rights under Union legislation[28] to open and use a payment account with basic features with credit institutions located in their territory, irrespective of whether they have a fixed address;

(h) expanding access to stable housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness, including families with children, through cooperation with public and private housing providers, social rental agencies and inclusive allocation mechanisms, and through cooperative and community-based models accompanied by appropriate support services and promoting coordination between community-based organisations and public service agencies to prevent a break in support once housing is secured;

(i) ensuring that emergency and temporary accommodation, including gender-segregated accommodation, is available, safe, accessible and provides appropriate support and meets the needs of all people experiencing homelessness, including for families with children and victims of domestic and sexual violence, while supporting their transition to stable housing;

(j) recognising and supporting the role of people with lived experience of homelessness in improving trust, access and the effectiveness of support services, as well as measures facilitating access to social inclusion and housing;

(k) measures to prevent and address stigmatisation and discriminatory practices in access to housing such as transparent criteria for social housing waiting lists, anti-bias training for housing professionals and support services for tenants facing discrimination;

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28 Directive 2014/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features (OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 214).

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(l) strengthening outreach-based social support services and coordination between community and public services for people living in informal settlements to improve access to stable and secure housing.

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE AND SECURE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

(7) Member States are recommended to boost the supply of social and affordable housing, in response to demographic needs, local shortages and territorial disparities, in particular by:

(a) promoting long-term rental conditions for private landlords and tenants by:

– ensuring a legal framework that facilitates the secure and well-functioning use of long-term rental contracts,

– allowing, where appropriate, the targeted use of proportionate financial incentives for landlords to offer long-term, affordable and secure housing solutions, in particular for families with children and young people,

– improving the legal clarity and efficiency of relevant eviction procedures and,

– balancing long-term rental stock being used for short-term rental purposes when duly justified;

(b) ensuring that renovation, energy-efficiency and neighbourhood-regeneration measures include social safeguards to prevent displacement;

(c) incentivising both public and private investments in new builds, renovations or the repurposing of existing buildings to expand social and affordable housing stock;

(d) enabling and supporting affordability-oriented housing models, including social and public housing, housing cooperatives, limited-profit housing associations, community land trusts as well as social rental agencies and other limited profit or non-profit approaches;

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(e) promoting and scaling up innovative cohabitation concepts, such as shared living spaces, cluster housing, co-housing and intergenerational housing arrangements, including with shared facilities and support services where relevant; and facilitating temporary and transitional housing models for students and young people, for instance matching students with residents in underused dwellings;

(f) considering ways of improving national, regional and local planning and permitting procedures for faster housing construction, without compromising sustainability standards or housing quality, while pursuing social inclusion and territorial cohesion, and reducing administrative barriers affecting construction services providers supporting the timely delivery of new social and affordable housing where needed, such as through the use and mobilisation of public land, while ensuring that it is well-connected to essential socioeconomic services and activities;

(g) enhancing the efficient use of existing housing stock, in particular by facilitating the repurposing, renovation and reuse of existing buildings and by mobilising vacant dwellings and public properties, limiting as much as possible unnecessary demolitions, while also promoting measures aimed at reducing overcrowding and improving housing quality;

(h) improving availability of and access to shelters and transitional housing, until long-term and stable housing solutions are available;

(i) taking into account the effects of climate-related events on housing supply, including in the outermost regions;

(j) dedicating a set share of new housing developments to social and affordable housing, reflecting local housing needs.

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(8) Complementing efforts to boost housing supply, Member States are recommended to put in place adequate, predictable and sustainable funding and investment frameworks in their national strategies. Member States are also recommended to make full use of the EU funding and financing tools available, including the forthcoming Pan-European Investment Platform for affordable and sustainable housing announced in the European Affordable Housing Plan[29]. These measures can help optimise the use of national and Union resources and scale up long-term, inclusive and affordable housing solutions, including by:

(a) aligning and coordinating resources across housing, social inclusion, employment, education, health, long-term care, urban regeneration and renovation policies, to boost policy coherence and impact;

(b) ensuring that publicly supported action includes, where appropriate, clear conditions on affordability, accessibility, sustainability and inclusive allocation of housing and links to community-based services;

(c) implementing innovative financing models, such as revolving funds, impact investment funds, blended financing and public guarantees, including cost-based rent models and reinvestment requirements, to support the long-term affordability of housing supply and to mobilise both public and private capital for affordable and social housing;

(d) discouraging harmful speculative behaviours in the housing market, for example by designing effective taxation policies and improving market transparency;

(e) supporting project development and technical assistance for local and regional authorities, social economy organisations and limited or non-profit housing providers;

[29] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM/2025/1025 final: The European Affordable Housing Plan.

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(f) promoting public-private partnerships, including with local authorities, higher education and training institutions, employers, housing providers and social economy organisations to deliver social and affordable housing, including student, trainee, apprentice and mixed-use housing projects;

(g) stepping up investments to support the construction and renovation of affordable and social housing, including through taking up financial instruments and blended funding under the current cohesion policy, while using the flexibilities offered under its mid-term review[30] to re-allocate EU funding towards affordable housing; and leveraging the reviewed Services of General Economic Interest State aid rules[31], which contain dedicated categories for both social and affordable housing.

(9) Member States are recommended to support people experiencing housing exclusion in accessing and retaining stable housing through:

(a) promoting access to long-term and secure housing, in line with a housing-led approach, for example the Housing First model, sustained funding and a cross-sectoral coordination of measures;

(b) putting in place adequate and appropriate integrated support services addressing not only the transition to but also the retention of adequate and secure housing. These could include, for example, house-search support, upskilling and reskilling and support to the access and retention of employment, financial and legal assistance, life-skills training and follow-up support to prevent individuals from experiencing housing exclusion again;

[30] Regulation 2025/1914 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2025 amending Regulations 2021/1058 and 2021/1056 as regards specific measures to address strategic challenges in the context of the mid-term review (OJ L, 2025/1914, 19.9.2025).

[31] Commission Decision 2025/2630 of 16 December 2025 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to State aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest and repealing Decision 2012/21 (OJ L, 2025/2630, 19.12.2025).

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(c) increasing the availability of adequate housing solutions for people experiencing housing exclusion, in particular parents with children, and ensure that they are taken into account and prioritised in the allocation mechanisms for social housing;

(d) promoting access to adequate financial support such as rent guarantees, low-interest loans and housing benefits, accompanied by accessible information on how to obtain such support and the necessary financial literacy.

(10) Member States are recommended to implement targeted measures to support young people on low incomes, including students, who face housing exclusion, which can act as a barrier to accessing and completing higher education, vocational education and training, as well as traineeships or apprenticeship programmes. These measures could include:

(a) creating and using effective networks between youth welfare services and general social welfare services to help young people find adequate housing solutions that meet their family, education and employment needs;

(b) increasing the supply of affordable student housing close to education and training facilities, including for students on study mobility exchanges or traineeships abroad;

(c) providing accessible guidance and practical support to advise and assist individuals with tenancy rights and administrative procedures, including through counselling centres in educational institutions;

(d) providing fiscal and financial measures including low-interest loans to help students and young people with limited financial means secure housing;

(e) taking targeted measures to improve access to adequate and affordable housing for young people at risk of housing exclusion living in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.

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(11) Member States are recommended to combine in their national strategic frameworks person-centred policies with place-based ones (such as urban planning and regeneration, local economic development and transport policies) to avoid mismatches between employment opportunities and affordable housing, in particular in areas where there are unfilled employment vacancies.

(12) Member States are recommended to take measures to support housing adaptations for persons with disabilities and older people with long-term care needs, especially those at risk of poverty. This should enable them to live in their homes for as long as possible and avoid housing exclusion. These measures should be designed to avoid disproportionate construction and renovation burdens. Such measures promote independent living and community inclusion and avoid the creation of segregated living arrangements.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND GOVERNANCE

(13) Member States are recommended to:

(a) put in place targeted and proportionate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, based on outcome indicators, to assess the effectiveness of their strategies on fighting housing exclusion and homelessness and provide for policy adjustments where required and without increasing administrative burden;

(b) report every five years to the Commission on the results of their national monitoring activities and on progress made in implementing this Recommendation, making use of existing reporting mechanisms where possible;

(c) ensure effective multi-level governance and coordination across national, regional and local authorities, and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including universities, vocational education and training providers, local employers, civil society, and social economy organisations and housing providers;

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(d) simplify legal and administrative frameworks to reduce administrative burden and ensure timely and simplified access to housing and related social, health, educational, employment and community-based support services;

(e) strengthen the capacity and quality of services intended to support people experiencing housing exclusion, including through training, a clear allocation of responsibilities and adequate resources for staff providing those services;

(f) in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies to prevent and reduce housing exclusion and homelessness, ensure the meaningful involvement of persons with lived experience of housing exclusion and homelessness, civil society organisations, and social economy organisations, especially at local levels;

(g) continue cooperating with other Member States, as well as private and public stakeholders at different levels to support knowledge sharing, promote mutual learning, consistent service delivery, exchange of best practices, effective policy design and implementation in the area of housing exclusion;

(h) actively contribute to the work of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, as the key forum for coordination, exchange and cooperation among Member States, regional and local authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, and other relevant stakeholders, including through knowledge sharing, evidence building, policy coordination, mutual learning and facilitating access to funding, and in synergy with the work of the Social Protection Committee and the work streams of the European Housing Alliance;

(i) promote the involvement of social partners and civil society organisations that play a key role in the fight against housing exclusion to ensure that EU policies reflect the realities on the ground, including through the involvement of people with lived experience of housing exclusion.

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(14) The Council welcomes the Commission's intention to:

(a) facilitate and support the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness:

(i) in the development of multi-annual work programmes to support Member States in implementing the actions set out in this Recommendation;

(ii) to continue its mutual learning activities;

(b) review the progress made in implementing this Recommendation and report to the Council five years after its adoption on the basis of the Member States reports;

(c) strengthen awareness-raising and communication efforts and increase the dissemination of results and good practice examples, including on the use of EU funds to tackle housing exclusion, at Union level and among Member States and relevant stakeholders.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

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