

# Czech Social Housing Strategy

An aerial photograph of a historic Czech city, likely Olomouc, featuring a dense cluster of buildings with red-tiled roofs and a prominent church spire. In the foreground, a river flows through the city, with a large crowd of people gathered on a bridge or promenade. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

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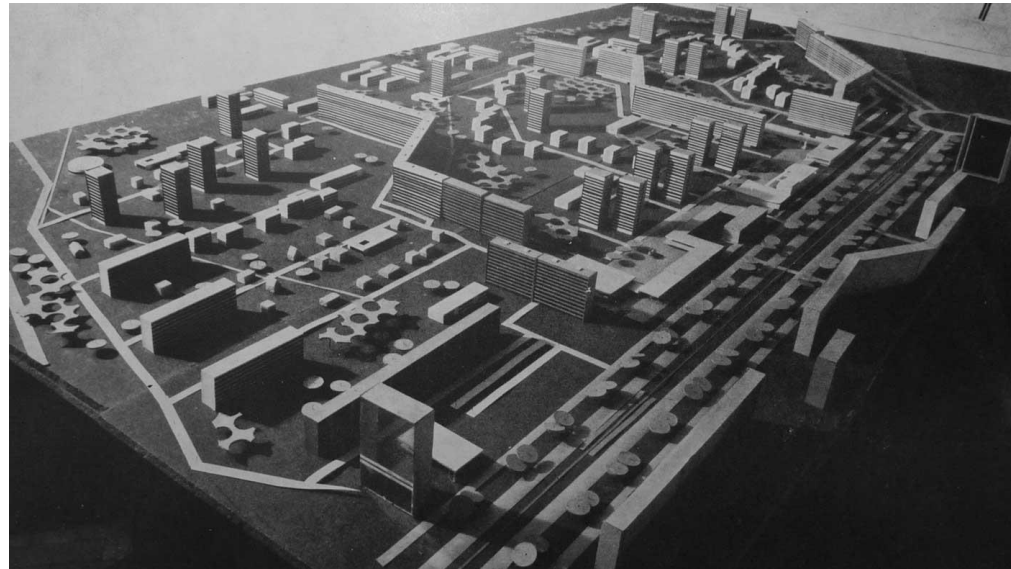
University of Ostrava  
Association of Shelters of the Czech Republic  
FEANTSA Policy Conference  
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Gdańsk, Poland

# Structure of the presentation

- Housing - a brief historical perspective of the situation in the Czech Republic
- Exclusion from housing - current status
- Social housing - national level
- Social housing – local level
- Housing projects
  - Ostrava city and Brno city
- Current challenges - examples
- European funding

# Housing - a brief historical perspective I.

- Housing policy before 1989
  - Lux (2012): the state influenced the extent of housing construction, the structure of the housing stock, housing consumption (rent regulation) → large state rental housing stock for low rents



Source: Google Pictures, Ostrava

# Housing – a brief historical perspective II.

- **Economic transformation in the 1990s**
  - Most restitutions took place between 1991 and 1993
  - 7% of the total housing stock was returned to the original owners
- **Privatization of municipal housing stock**
  - Transferring flats from state to municipalities, privatization of flats, sale to existing occupiers
- **Deregulation of rent**
  - 90s - housing with regulated rent as a "pillow" softening the impact of the transformation of economy on the inhabitants
  - 1993 - amendment to the Civil Code - newly rented flats were released from regulation → housing costs

# Exclusion from housing - current situation

- **Increase of social exclusion in the Czech Republic - analysis in 2015**
  - Social exclusion points to the most endangered groups of people, often living in an inappropriate environment
  - 606 socially excluded localities, 95-115 000 inhabitants
  - 700 hostels
  - 216 shelters with the capacity of 7,311 beds
  - In the Czech Republic there is an increase in the number of socially excluded people, the 2006 analysis shows an almost double increase
- **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2015) - evaluation of the survey in municipalities (questioning municipalities with extended scope)**
  - 119,000 people at the risk of losing their homes (ETHOS - inappropriate housing, insecure housing)
  - 68 500 people without housing (ETHOS - no roof, no flat)
  - **187 000 people in need of housing!**

# Social services for people in need of housing

- **They follow the Social Services Act (Act No. 108/2006)**
- Social services are provided as residential, ambulatory and field
- **Facilities of social services for the target group of people excluded from housing:**
  - Nightshelters (75)
  - Shelters (216)
  - Halfway houses (38)
  - Low-threshold day centres (for homeless people) (62)
  - Facilities for emergency aid (41)
  - Homes with a special regime
  - And others for target groups – eg people with disabilities, seniors ...
- **Association of Shelters** - association providing umbrella to people and organizations dealing with people without shelter or endangered by housing loss and creating professional background for them
- **Different non-profit organizations**

# Social housing – national level - participants

- **Ministry of Regional Development**

- Housing Concept of the Czech Republic by 2020 (prepared in 2011)
- Problem with definition of the target group (eg excluding people who have lost housing “through their own fault”), they are excluded from Labour Office)
- The concept stated that the primary solution to housing emergency should be social work, not housing.

- **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

- Concept of Social Housing of the Czech Republic 2015-2025
- Social Housing Act
- \* The Act is under the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Human Rights, Legislation and Equal Opportunities

- **Agency for Social Inclusion (The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic)**

- The Agency cooperates with municipalities that have socially excluded areas in their territory, preparation of documents with measures
- Strategy to combat social exclusion 2011-2015
- Strategy to combat social exclusion 2016-2020

# Concept of Social Housing of the Czech Republic 2015-2025 (I.)

- **The government approved the concept in October 2015**
- In the Czech Republic there are households in need of housing (according to ETHOS) and with low incomes (more than 40% of household income)
  - The system of social housing is set up by the municipality
- Discussion about the number of flats in the municipality(not in the concept)
- Lobby of different participants - political parties, municipalities
- Total housing stock- 10% → 5% → according to the need



# Concept of Social Housing of the Czech Republic 2015-2025 (II.)

- 3 types of housing, not levels!
- **Crisis housing**
  - Emergency and support system for individuals and households where acute housing needs must be solved
  - Compulsory cooperation with social workers
  - For 6 months
- **Social housing**
  - Families with children and people without roof/flat
  - Compulsory cooperation with social workers
  - For 2 years and with the possibility of extension
- **Affordable housing**
  - Seniors, disabled, families with children, female and male single-parents
  - Voluntary cooperation with social workers
  - For 2 years and with the possibility of extension

# Draft of the Law on Social Housing (I.)

- **Government Policy Statement (2014)** - Government prepares a law on social housing
- **Prolonging/postponing preparations**
  - Disagreements of ministries, objections of municipalities
  - Long negotiations and solving disagreements
  - A fundamental shift in the involvement of municipalities - from obligation to voluntarines
  - Competence dispute between ministries - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Ministry of Regional Development
  - March 8, 2017 - The government approved the Law on Social Housing (9 for, 0 against, 5 abstentions - including 2 key ministries)
  - March 21, 2017 - **the government laid the law to the House**
  - The House – **hearing of the law was interrupted**
  - October 2017 - elections to the House of Deputies
  - Current political crisis – resignation
  - The chances that the law will be approved during this election are minimal



# Draft of the Law on Social Housing (II.)– target group

- Person in need of housing (§4)
  - is without housing (§5)  
and/or
  - a household spends more than 40% of the eligible income
- The draft also defines a "particularly vulnerable person" (§ 6, a-j, eg a person receiving a retirement pension, a person caring for a minor child ...)

# Draft of the Law on Social Housing(III.)

## - municipalities

**The involvement of municipalities in the social housing system is voluntary!**

- **The municipality has involved**

- The municipality takes a social survey and assesses the right to enter the system
- The potential occupier's debt to the municipality is assessed
- The municipality decides on the form of assistance and provides a flat (within 24 months)

- **The municipality has not involved**

- The Labour Office assesses the entitlement to enter the system, carries out social research and decides on the form of assistance
- State Housing Development Fund - provides housing (within 36 months)

# Draft of the Law on Social Housing (IV.) – provided flats

- “Typology“ of provided flats:
  - **Social flat** (without the support of social work)
  - **Social flat with the support of social work**
    - Creating an individual support plan - obligation for the occupier to fulfill the plan

- Determination of the technical standard of a social flat
  - Minimum and maximum floor space
  - Basic hygienic equipment
  - Basic equipment for preparation of dishes
  - Adaptation of the technical condition and equipment to the health of the people who use the flat

Kategorie bytu Flat size	Number of people Počet osob			
	1	2	3	4 a více
	Size (square metres) Velikost (v m <sup>2</sup> )			
1+kk	23-37,9	23-37,9	x	x
2+kk (1+1)	x	38-51,9	38-51,9	x
3+kk (2+1)	x	x	52-67,9	52-67,9
4+kk (3+1)	x	x	x	68-82

# Social housing– local level I. - participants

- **Municipalities** (basic territorial self-governing community of citizens)
  - **Creating a housing concept of the municipality** - different target groups, entry threshold, length of hire, support of occupiers
  - Different capacities of municipal housing stock
  - Target group preference
  - The principle of merit and continuity of levels (shelter → social housing → flat) - lack of flats for the target group
  - Hourglass Effect
- **Non-profit organizations**
  - Responding to the rising number of people who can not rent housing
  - Housing with an accompanying social program
  - NGO rents a flat from the municipality / private owner → NGO rents the flat to clients and provides social work
  - High entry threshold (eg indebtedness), short-term rent agreements (1-6 months), flats are private property in many cases

# Social housing– local level II. - projects

- **Project of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - support for social housing**
  - Pilot testing of the social housing system - 16 participating municipalities
  - Municipalities as a key actor in providing social housing and the social needs of the population
  - Elements of Housing First Access - residential housing with social work support
  - Risks - Different approaches of municipalities in setting up a social housing system, focusing on target groups
- **Social housing projects** - examples of Ostrava and Brno
  - Ostrava – pilot verification of the concept of social housing
  - Brno – Rapid Re-Housing, Housing first

# Social housing– Brno

- **Rapid re-housing**

- Project for 2 years, 2016-2018
- Registry week - survey of households in need of housing
- Settling down of 50 families with children
- Target group - a family with a child in need of housing
- Drawing households into the project
- Municipal flats, contracts for 1 year
- Social work with households involved
- Evaluation of the project - Faculty of Social Studies of Ostrava University

- **Projekt Housing first**

- Upcoming project
- 65 individuals



# Statutory City of Ostrava

# OSTRAVA!!!

Data on 31 March, 2017 :

- 23 urban districts
- 290 309 inhabitants
- 15 socially excluded localities with about 6,520 inhabitants
- 43 dormitories with approved rules of operation with a capacity of 5,312 beds



# Social services in Ostrava I.

- **Crisis Assistance:** 2 (capacity 5 + 9 places)
- **Nightshelters:** 3 (2 M, 106 beds, 1 W, 14 beds)
- **Shelters:** 12
  - 6 for women and mothers with children (184 beds)
  - 4 for men (145 beds)
  - 1 men and women (25 beds, 6 W, 19 M)
  - 1 for families (52 beds)
- **Low-threshold day centres :** 2 (125 places, M and W)
- **Homes with Special Regime:** 2
- **Halfway house:** 1
- **Social housing NGOs:** 463 "social" flats, more than 1,200 people

# Project of the Statutory City of Ostrava

## Project of Housing Concept and its pilot verification (2016-2019)

- **Creating the concept of social housing in the statutory city of Ostrava**
  - 2 working groups (municipality, Agency for Social Inclusion, urban districts, non-profit organizations, Faculty of Social Studies of Ostrava University, energy supplier, an owner of the private housing fund)
  - people in need of housing are also involved in the project (focus group, constant composition, 7 meetings)
- **Evaluation throughout the project**
  - Cooperation of stakeholders in setting up the system of social housing
  - Formative evaluation of the cooperation of social worker - client

# Pilot verification of the concept

- **Crisis housing – 5 flats**

- CS – people in crisis → fast moving in
- Rent with basic equipment (furniture – beds, table, chairs, wardrobe, fridge, washing machine...)
- Energies are connected up
- Compulsory cooperation with social workers

- **Social housing– 100 flats**

- Social research (survey is carried out by social workers in the household requesting entry into the social housing system)
- Pilotage of housing emergency quantification (creation of a point system that evaluates the current situation (need of housing) of the household)
- Co-operation with an energy supplier (setting payment schedules, extending from the usual 3 months to 24 months)
- Compulsory cooperation with social workers - individual intensity adjustment, individual plan preparation
- After 3 months - change in the character of support (different rate of social work):
  - Affordable flats
  - Social flats

# Current challenges - examples

- Risks - different approaches of municipalities in setting up the system of social housing , focusing on target groups
- Technical condition of real estates used as social flats - flats are often in socially excluded localities, with high rents, in poor condition
- The high entry threshold for social housing (eg indebtedness), short-term rental agreements (1-6 months), flats are in many cases privately owned
- Different practice in social housing - setting up the cooperation of client - social worker, intensity of support
- Research on Reintegration of Mothers from Shelters into Permanent Housing Forms – participatory research (Glumbíková, 2017):
- Long-term stay in shelters reduces the likelihood of successful reintegration
- Adaptation of services of shelters to families and children
- Cumulative roles of a social worker (keeper of the rules x counsellor) - high demands
- Hourglass effect - stay in a shelter is not followed by the stay in a social flat ( stays in a shelter are repeated in one third of cases)

# European funding

- **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Operational Programme Employment**
  - Thematic objectives – 9. Functioning social system and combating poverty
  - Priority axis 2: Social inclusion and combating poverty
- **Ministry of Regional Development – Integrated Regional Operational Programme**
  - Thematic objectives – 9. Functioning social system and combating poverty
  - Priority axis 2: Enhancing public services and living conditions for the inhabitants of regions
    - Social housing– the plan is 5 000 flats
    - Community centres
    - Infrastructure of social services

Thank you for your  
attention!

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