Barriers to Moving to a Housing-Led System in Central and Eastern Europe

Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis

and

Metropolitan Research Institute

The Project

▶ Sponsored by World Habitat

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▶ Products: a comparative report, four country policy breafings, recording of online presentations, all available online:

https://world-habitat.org/our-programmes/homelessness/ending-homelessness-in-central-and-eastern-europe/

Goal

To contribute to a positive shift in supporting housing-led policy measures in two ways:

- ▶ Exploring factors that are essential for change

- ▶ Identifying country-specific and regional factors that can be built on to progress within existing policies and practices

Scope and methods

- Four countries: Croatia, Hungary, Romania Slovakia

- Qualitative methods

  - desktop research

  - Interviews

  - Four country-specific co-creation stakeholder workshops

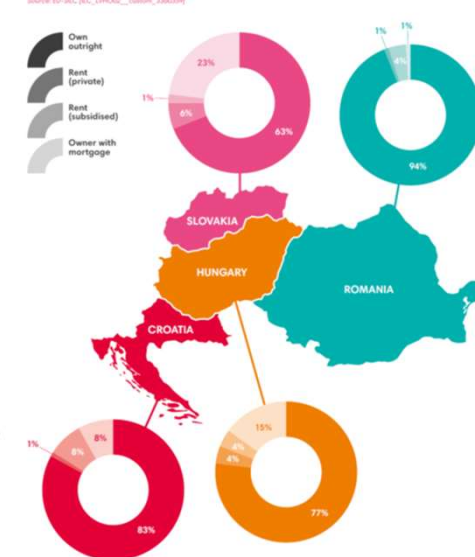- Here we concentrate on common findings

Housing in four NMSs - challenges

▶ Common historical and institutional contexts have created **barriers across the four countries, different from Western Europe:**

    ▶ lower level of economic development - underdeveloped and low-capacity welfare state

    ▶ widespread stereotypes often exploited for political gain

    ▶ demographic processes

▶ **Tenure structure**: distorted and unsafe tenure structure

▶ **Housing investment and finance:** much volatility

▶ **„Affordable" housing programs** are small and short-term

Figure 1 / Tenure structure (2020)

Homelessness in four NMSs - challenges

▶ **Crisis intervention services** play a dominant role

▶ Lack of **prevention**

▶ **Local initiatives** are loosely connected with national frameworks, thus can remain isolated

▶ **Scarce funding** from national budgets

▶ Strong **added value of EU funds** to serve innovation

Day centers

Outreach services / teams

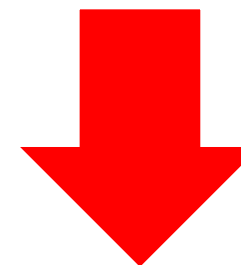Healthcare services

Food distribution

Lessons learned (1)

▶ **Structural challenges** can be overcome (within county variation)

▶ **Change to be planned on the long run** transformation needs to be based on various initatives, including forceful joint advocacy, sharing of working practices, cooperation

▶ **Added value of the 2030 process:** The 2030 agenda for homelessness offers a potential lever for progress, with the support of EU platform

▶ **Local authorities are key drivers** and stakeholders: more effective local service delivery is moving towards housing-led solutions

Effective service design

Housing Led focus
- prevention
- (re)housing + floating services
- follow-up while (re)housed

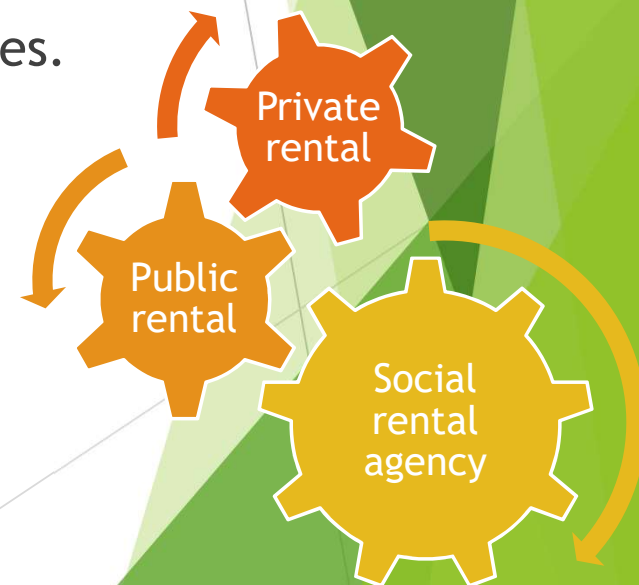**Current response system**
- emergency response

Lessons learned (2)

▶ **Pooling of expertise** is necessary to develop synergies: collaborative approach works best

▶ **Shifting narratives:** A shift in political discourse and public perception is essential to combat negative stereotypes, and promoting evidence-based, effective solutions

▶ **Policy innovation:** promote practical housing-led solutions and supportive regulatory frameworks, while also addressing issues in the private rental market.
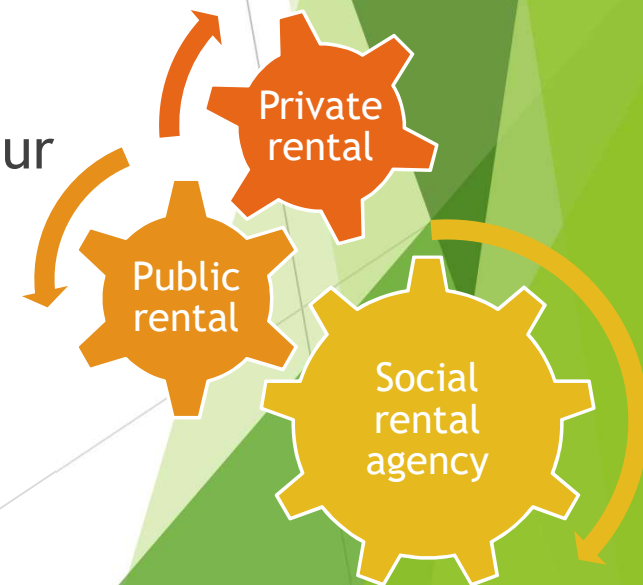
Housing stock for housing-led solutions

▶ Housing-led programs increase the supply of social housing

  ▶ by halting privatisation and mobilising and renovating vacant, dilapidated homes.

▶ Increasing the supply of affordable and social housing

  ▶ by purchasing pre-existing flats or constructing new homes.

▶ Social rental agency initiatives

  ▶ organisations and municipalities act as intermediaries to sublet from private landlords, providing guarantees to landlords and tenants

A **mixed portfolio:** municipal, private rental and the NGOs' own apartments

Private rental

Public rental

Social rental agency

Prevention, prevention, prevention

▶ Upstream prevention is critical: to address the needs of groups with an elevated risk of homelessness (e.g. people leaving institutions, young people not in education systems, divorce or veterans) as early as possible, and work to lift barriers of these groups to access help if needed

▶ Very limited, unintegrated preventive services in all four countries, esp. for vulnerable groups.

▶ While beyond the direct field of activity of most stakeholders we address here, improving prevention services should be a critical element of tackling homelessness in the four countries in question.

Private rental

Public rental

Social rental agency

Key recommendations

To contribute to the scaling up and expansion of housing-led projects as a means of ending homelessness

International funding and advocacy organisations

- Prioritise, fund and evaluate HL projects
- Provide TA and share knowledge
- Provide long-term funding

NGO practitioners

- Train staff and learn new methods
- Separate housing services from social work
- Advocate for better regulation and prevention

Municipal governments and city managers

- Develop and expand social and affordable housing
- Initiate social rental agencies
- Promote housing / rent allowance schemes

National governments

- Act on Lisbon Agreement
- Create integrated national homelessness strategies, incl. better regulation and prevention
- Provide funding for housing

EU agencies and units

- CSR should emphasize steps to prevent and end homelessness
- Monitor implementation of funds
- Generate reliable data for better policy design

Thank you for your attention!

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