



**Network of Local Authority
Observatories on Active Inclusion**

SUPPORTING ACTIVE INCLUSION THROUGH HOUSING - A RESPONSE FROM FIVE EUROPEAN CITIES

European report on the role of housing services for the active inclusion of
people furthest away from the labour market

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EUROCITIES



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1. Introduction

This report examines the role of housing and employment/training services for the inclusion of particularly vulnerable people.¹ The report is an output of the EUROCITIES-Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) - a network of five cities that have established Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (LAOs) within their city administrations. Within the EUROCITIES-NLAO project, as Local Authority Observatories, the Cities of Bologna (Italy), Prague (Czech Republic), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Stockholm (Sweden), and Southampton (United Kingdom) carry out research on the implementation of policies at local level, particularly focusing on the provision of social services. The EUROCITIES-NLAO project is coordinated by EUROCITIES, the network of major European cities, which also holds responsible for this report.

The Active Inclusion Strategy was designed at the European level as an integrated approach to tackle poverty and social exclusion. It consists of three pillars:

- adequate minimum income,
- link to the labour market,
- access to quality services.

These pillars are seen as preconditions for the economic and social integration of people excluded from the labour market. Each pillar of the strategy is underpinned by a set of quality principles (common principles) for its implementation (for more on the Active Inclusion strategy and the Common Principles see section chapter 2).

Cities are key to the delivery of social services such as social housing or social assistance services. Through their responsibilities as policy-makers and service providers, they are involved in the whole cycle of service provision, from commissioning and procurement to delivery and evaluation. Also, cities play an important role in adapting European strategies, such as the Active Inclusion strategy and national strategies, to the specific needs and realities of their territories. It is at local level that policies are put in place to implement European and national strategies. Therefore, cities are in an excellent position to monitor the implementation of the Active Inclusion strategy, particularly with regard to the third pillar on social services.

The EUROCITIES-NLAO project consists of two key areas of investigation. The first concentrates on the role of housing services (social and supported housing). The second looks at employment and training services. The aim of this project is to bring about mutual learning and to use comparisons and good examples to attempt to influence future policy. The EUROCITIES-NLAO is a pilot project running from March 2009 to August 2010, co-financed by the EC's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

This European report is based on the National Reports² of the LAOs that analyse housing and employment services across their country from a local perspective.³ The National Reports include also examples from other than the partner cities. In addition, the European comparison draws on a

¹ The report at hand is an intermediate output of the EUROCITIES-NLAO project. It includes the results of the first research phase on housing. The results of the research phase on employment/training will be incorporated for the final publication, due by June 2010.

² The National Reports are available on www.eurocities-nlao.eu.

³ Depending on the country, reports vary in geographical scope. For example, due to the strong regional differences in legislation, regulation and social situation, the Italian report mainly analyses the situation in the Emilia-Romagna Region.

literature review as well as input from a European stakeholder workshop that took place in October 2009. The information is complemented by results from discussions between EUROCITIES-NLAO-city partners and EUROCITIES Brussels office in various (physical or virtual) workshops throughout the project period. This report was written by Anke Thiel (EUROCITIES-NLAO Project Coordinator), Silke Moschitz (Project Manager), Silvia Ganzerla/Simon Güntner (current/former Senior Officer Social Affairs).

The report introduces, in Chapter 2, the efforts of EU and Member States in bringing about social inclusion and the role of the recently established Active Inclusion strategy. It then attempts to further define the key concepts the Active Inclusion strategy, namely the role of social services within and the target group of this strategy. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the welfare state and social service provision in the five LAO countries, particularly focusing on the role of the municipality, illustrated by examples from LAO cities. Chapter 4 examines the role of housing in Active Inclusion: it identifies main challenges for cities across Europe, analyses policy and institutional frameworks as well as responses at the local level and illustrates these with local practices from EUROCITIES-NLAO cities and other cities. It assesses local implementation against the EU common principles on the access to services, identifies gaps and gives recommendations to address these gaps. Chapter 5 concludes on the report findings and sets out general recommendations.

2. Integrating people - European policy responses to exclusion

Despite significant differences between social welfare systems across Europe, Member States face common challenges such as demographic change, migration or, more recently, economic recession all requiring coordinated responses.

Since 2000, the European Union has provided a framework for national strategy development and policy coordination between EU countries to tackle poverty and social exclusion. The so-called social Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is a soft approach to intergovernmental policy coordination, whereby policy decisions remain at the national level and cooperation is voluntary.⁴

In the field of social inclusion, the EU's activities aim to combat poverty and social exclusion, reform national social welfare systems through mutual learning, tackle current challenges posed by demographic change and report regularly with data which is directly comparable across the EU.⁵

However, despite the progress made, high levels of poverty and exclusion from the labour market persist and, according to the EC, "national policies have not always identified the right response to the growing complexity of multiple disadvantages affecting vulnerable persons furthest from the labour market"⁶. In response to this and following consultation with stakeholders, in October 2008 the EC set out, as a first legal act in the field of social inclusion, the Active Inclusion

⁴ For more information on the social OMC, please read EUROCITIES' publication "The EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process 2008-2010: What's in it for local practitioners?"

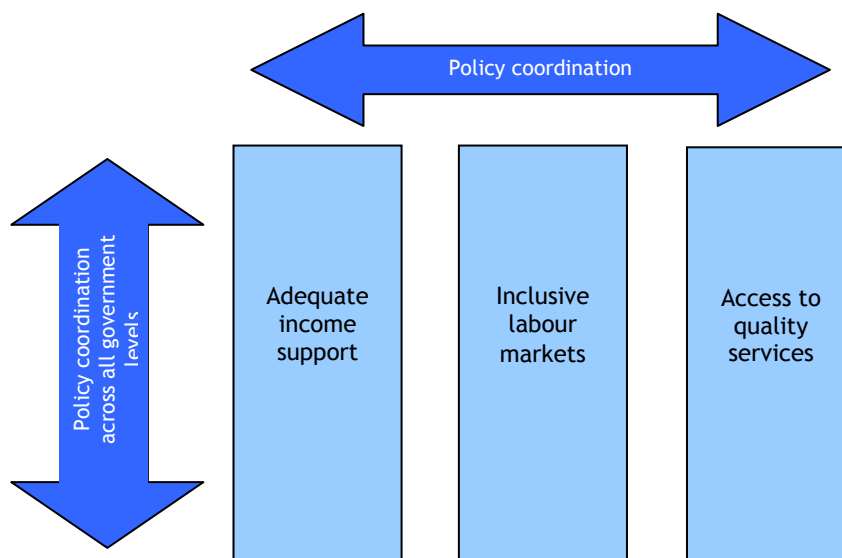
⁵ EC website : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=750>

⁶ COM(2008) 639 final

strategy⁷ as an integrated approach to tackle poverty and social exclusion. This approach aims to “facilitate the integration into sustainable, quality employment for those who can work and provide resources which are sufficient to live in dignity, together with support for social participation, for those who cannot”⁸. Thus the EC acknowledges that employment via participation in the mainstream labour market is not necessarily an option for everybody, notably not for those ‘people furthest away from the labour market’.

According to the relevant EC documents, the Active Inclusion strategy combines three pillars as prerequisites for integration: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services (see Diagram 1). Equally, the EC highlights coordination between these pillars and throughout all levels of government (European, national, regional and local) as being an important element of the strategy to work. Box 1 gives an overview on key documents on the ‘Active Inclusion’ strategy.

Diagram 1: Active Inclusion strategy



Source: own illustration

Box 1: Active Inclusion - Key documents

- European Parliament Resolution on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, 6 May 2009
- Council Conclusions on common active inclusion principles to combat poverty more effectively, 17 Dec 2008
- EC Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, COM 2008/867/EC, 3 Oct 2008
- EC Communication on a Commission Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, COM(2008) 639 final, 3 Oct 2008
- EC Communication Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market, COM(2007) 620 final, 17 Oct 2007
- EC Communication concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market, COM(2006)44 final, 8 Feb 2006

Available from: www.europa.eu; www.europarl.eu; www.consilium.europa.eu

⁷ Recommendation 2008/867/EC

⁸ Recommendation 2008/867/EC

2.1 Key concepts

This section sets out the key concepts underpinning the third pillar of the Active Inclusion strategy - the focus of this report. It identifies the role of social services as well as the target group for the Active Inclusion strategy.

2.1.1 Social services as a pillar of active inclusion

Definition of social services

According to the EC, the third pillar of the Active Inclusion approach focuses on social services of general interest (SSGI).⁹ The EC set a conceptual framework for these services by distinguishing two broad categories:

- (1) statutory and complementary social security schemes covering the main life risks;
- (2) other services provided directly to the person that aim at social inclusion and safeguarding fundamental rights, such as social assistance services, employment and training services, social housing, child care or long-term care services.¹⁰

For the Active Inclusion strategy, the EC considers the latter category of services particularly relevant, namely the following services:^{11,12}

- social assistance services,
- employment and training services,
- housing support and social housing,
- childcare,
- long-term care services,
- health services.

In its research, the EURO CITIES-NL AO draws on this (broader) concept of social services relevant for Active Inclusion although what is considered as ‘social service’ differs from country to country.^{13,14}

Function of social services

According to the aim outlined in the EC documents, the Active Inclusion strategy as a whole, and the role of social services in particular, go further than labour market integration. Two main functions of social services can be derived from the EC’s second consultation paper on active inclusion:

- (1) Preventing social exclusion, promoting social inclusion and safeguarding human rights
 - through “assistance for persons faced by personal challenges or crises (such as

⁹ COM(2007) 620 final

¹⁰ EC Communication on ‘Social Services of General Interest’ of 26 April 2006, COM(2006) 177 final

¹¹ Recommendation 2008/867/EC

¹² To stretch out the concept of active inclusion to education and life-long learning, for its preventive function for inclusion, has been formulated as a recommendation in the EURO CITIES’ response to the EC consultation on Active Inclusion of people furthest away from the labour market (Feb 2008).

¹³ This paper does not deal with cash benefits.

¹⁴ Chapter 3 will elaborate on definitions in each country covered by this study.

unemployment, over-indebtedness, drug addiction or family breakdown)”¹⁵ people are put in a position to better cope with their situations and live a life in dignity

- through activities that “integrate persons with long-term health or disability problems”¹⁶: Chronically sick or disabled people often face difficulties in living independently, because they might not be able to carry out day-to-day tasks without help, either because of physical disability or because of mental health problems. Other than this, they are often not able to integrate into the mainstream labour market as it often does not provide work places that are suitable for them.
- through social housing, which ensures decent living conditions for people with difficulties to find housing in the regular housing market

(2) Enhancing employability and integration into the labour market,

- through activities that “ensure that the persons concerned are able to completely reintegrate into society and into the labour market (such as rehabilitation, language training for immigrants, occupational training and reintegration) and to ensure access to affordable child care”¹⁷

It is possible to assume that both dimensions of inclusion - social and economic - are mutually reinforcing, and that many social services will ultimately contribute to both goals. On the one hand, support in coping with difficult life situations will bring people in a position from where they eventually can be integrated into the labour market. On the other hand, being in decent work will contribute to people’s self-esteem and help (re-)gaining social capital and networks.

Quality of social services

For social services to fulfill these functions, it is important that they are of adequate quality. Therefore, the EC has, for each pillar of the Active Inclusion strategy, set out a number of common principles to assess their quality. In addition, the EC set out overarching principles to ensure effectiveness of integrated Active Inclusion policies across the three pillars. These principles have also been endorsed by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.¹⁸ The box below presents the common principles in reference to ‘access to quality services’:

Common principles - ‘access to quality services’

1. Territorial availability, physical accessibility, affordability;
2. Solidarity, equal opportunities for service users and employees, and due account for diversity of users;
3. Investment in human capital, working conditions, and adequate physical infrastructure;
4. Comprehensive and coordinated services, conceived and delivered in an integrated manner;
5. Users’ involvement and personalised approaches to meet the multiple needs of people as individuals;
6. Monitoring and performance evaluation and sharing of best practice.¹⁹

¹⁵ COM(2007) 620 final

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ Council Conclusions on ‘Common Active Inclusion Principles’ of 17 Dec 2008; European Parliament Resolution on the ‘Active Inclusion of people excluded from the labour market’

¹⁹ Recommendation 2008/867/EC

The relevant documents of the European institutions do not operationalise these principles. As part of their research, the EUROCITIES-NLAO project partners have interpreted and qualified the common principles for the fields of social/supported housing and employment/training services (see chapter 4.4 where Active Inclusion policies in these fields are being assessed against the common principles).

2.1.2 What social groups are ‘excluded from the labour market’?

The EC does not provide an exact definition on which groups are ‘excluded from the labour market’. However, while referring to people of working age, the EC approaches a definition of which *groups* can be considered to be among ‘people excluded from the labour market’:

“long-term unemployed and inactive persons who either became discouraged after repeated past job search failures or were willing to work but were not able to find a job, for a variety of reasons: disability or chronic illness, lack of basic skills, discrimination and/or family responsibilities.”²⁰

Referring to the *problems* excluded groups are facing, the EC lists

“severe forms of deprivation and social exclusion, such as homelessness, drug addiction, alcoholism, lack of access to basic healthcare and illiteracy, aggravated in certain cases by ethnic discrimination and/or living in areas of multiple disadvantage”²¹

and

“personal challenges or crises (such as unemployment, over-indebtedness, drug addiction or family breakdown).”²²

Moreover, the EC consistently highlights the multidimensional character of exclusion meaning that often more than one factor will play a role in the process of exclusion.

Observations from the five cities involved in the EUROCITIES-NLAO project broadly confirm the EC’s views. Also, they show that groups that are understood as being ‘excluded’ are indeed very similar from one city to another. All of these are seen as important issues in each project city. The following groups can be identified as being particularly at risk of being excluded from the labour market, only slightly varying across the cities:

- Long-term unemployed
- Migrants and ethnic minorities
- Single parents
- Disabled or chronically sick people
- Older workers
- Early school-leavers, people with a lack of basic skills
- Homeless people, drug-abusers, prison-leavers, over-indebted people, people suffering from family breakdown
- Trafficked women, women exposed to violence

²⁰ COM (2006) 044 final

²¹ ibid

²² COM (2007) 620 final

However, at least three groups seem to have been overlooked by the EC's official documents on 'Active Inclusion':

- Asylum seekers and undocumented migrants

Typically, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are excluded from the labour market on basis of their citizenship. They may be deprived of their human/social rights facing an extreme form of exclusion within society/the labour market.

- 'Working poor'

Although the EC recognises the 'working poor' as a vulnerable group and highlights the need for quality jobs to prevent in-work poverty²³, by definition this group is not included in the concept of 'people excluded from the labour market'. Indeed, work reduces the risk of poverty (higher at-risk-of-poverty rate among elderly and children). However, in EU, 8 % of employed people live at risk of poverty.²⁴ Therefore, the 'working poor' constitute a grey area in between those people with sufficient income and jobless people who cannot make ends meet.

- Young adults who are neither in employment, education nor training, commonly referred to as NEETs

Young people unable to enter the labour market soon after finishing their core education can face more difficulties in the longer term.

²³ Recommendation 2008/867/EC

²⁴ EUROSTAT: Statistics in focus 46/2009: http://www.eds-destatis.de/de/downloads/sif/sf_09_046.pdf

3. Social services in active inclusion - The welfare state and the role of cities in social service provision

This chapter aims to present an overview of how social service provision is organised within the context of overall welfare state provision in the cities (and countries) of the EUROCITIES-NLAO project. It identifies trends in social service provision. Particular emphasis is put on the role of city/local government administrations ('municipalities').

As an analytical framework this chapter draws on the historical interpretation of welfare regimes building on Esping-Andersen (1990). According to this typology, four types of welfare state models are being distinguished:²⁵

- a '*liberal*' regime where individuals are primarily responsible for ensuring their welfare needs are met from their incomes with minimum safety net services provided by the state
- a '*conservative-corporatist*' regime where traditional social structures, often based on the Church, the family and wider community are supported by additional state services when necessary; the social insurance system tends to preserve status and class differentials; a subgroup of this regime type is the '*mediterranean*' regime
- a '*social democratic*' regime where welfare is provided on a universal basis
- a '*post socialist*' regime where, as the economy is in transition, responsibility for welfare support has fallen mainly on the family, although differing long term approaches to welfare are emerging in different countries.

The selection of the five EUROCITIES-NLAO cities was taken with a view of having cities sitting in countries of different welfare state regimes: Stockholm in Sweden (*social-democratic regime*), Southampton in the UK (*liberal regime*), Rotterdam in the Netherlands (hybrid-form between *social-democratic* and *conservative-corporatist regime*), Bologna in Italy (*mediterranean regime*) and Prague in the Czech Republic (hybrid-form between *post-socialist* and *liberal regime*).²⁶

In the UK, the state provides for a basic level of support and social protection, with greater levels of support for disabled people. In line with the liberal tradition, the general understanding is that employment is the best solution to preventing social and economic exclusion. Consequently, many social benefits are provided on a means-tested basis assuming that a high level of protection reduces incentives to take up employment. Even greater emphasis has been placed on supporting individuals into employment to enable people to take advantage of economic opportunities of employment with the New Deal policy from mid-1990 onwards.

Social services are organised at a local level with some schemes funded nationally, but mediated through local government and some funded locally. Municipalities are involved to some extent in most social services.²⁷ In the integration of jobless people, municipalities work in 'local partnership' with central government. The development of approaches based on commissioning

²⁵ according to (1) the specific relation of state, market and family in welfare production; (2) the degree of 'de-commodification' (Esping-Andersen 1990) meaning the independence from the (labour) market for being provided with income and social protection and (3) the effects of social policy on the stratification of society and its level of inequality; for more information: Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999), Kohl 1993, Lessenich/Ostner (1998), Offe/Fuchs (2007), in: Mau/Verwiebe 2009; Ferrera 1996

²⁶ Information in the following paragraphs is based mainly on Schubert et al. (2008) and information from LAOs.

²⁷ The common use of the term 'social services' in the UK usually applies only to social care services for children and adults; however here the term is used in a wider more inclusive sense to include social care and social support services.

services and creating local service market places over the last two decades have meant that municipalities in the UK have reduced their role as direct providers in some areas of service. Independent providers, mainly not-for-profit providers, for example now hold the biggest share of the social care services market, with an expanding social enterprise sector. Commissioning approaches seek to balance cost efficiency, greater user orientation and quality of services.

As a result, the UK system of social service provision entails a high level of plurality of service providers - sometimes providing users with a choice between services. The strong focus is that the client/beneficiary needs to be involved in planning of benefits (Mitton 2008). New models based on 'personalisation' i.e. where individual users are enabled to design and fund their own 'personalised' supports are being introduced in care services and these developments are spreading to other areas.

Box 2: UK - Quality Assessment Framework

The Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) was introduced nationally in 2003 and sets out the standards expected in the delivery of the Supporting People (i.e. supported housing) services. The QAF also identified methods of evidencing achievement and has proved a successful practical tool for ensuring continuous improvement in services delivering housing-related support over the past five years.

The QAF is an essential part of the local authorities' means of ensuring that providers deliver services to an acceptable standard and in accordance with agreed contractual expectations. There are five core objectives:

- Assessment and Support Planning
- Security, Health and Safety
- Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse
- Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion
- Client Involvement and Empowerment

The QAF is a self-assessment tool that is undertaken annually and is part of the contract-monitoring framework.

This tool is used to measure and understand the level of service delivery, highlighting any issues, challenges and making any recommendations.

Quarterly contract monitoring meetings support annual performance monitoring. These monitoring meetings are the forum for discussing the key performance indicators (KPI's). It is in this forum that any concerns or variance on targets would be discussed.

The Swedish welfare system, representing the social-democratic welfare state regime, is characterised by a generally high level of protection that is provided on a universal basis. In combination with the tax system, the welfare state aims at equalisation of incomes and opportunities. Therefore individual social protection is relatively independent of one's status of employment. However, in the recent decade a shift towards more 'welfare to work' is notable.

Traditionally, most competence in social policy lies with local governments. This applies to what is considered a social service in Sweden (social welfare, child-care, non-medical long-term care), While supported housing is also the responsibility of the municipality, for the remaining services, employment, and health care, either the state or, in latter case, the county hold responsibility. Yet, employment and training services fall as 'social services' issue and are run by municipalities when they are targeted at social assistance recipients such as job training programmes.

In general, municipalities dominate the provision of social services. In a universalistic system like Sweden, acceptance of private service providers is traditionally much lower than in the other countries studied and until recently non-profit providers have always been very small in

number. However, the last few years have seen a considerable increase in such actors in social service provision in the country. Private providers have become more widespread in some municipalities also with an aim of personalising services and increasing user orientation. In some cases, users now have the possibility to choose a provider. However, municipalities monitor the quality and evaluate activities regardless of who provides the service. In this respect, the municipality's role is slowly changing, albeit to a much lesser extent than in the UK, from service providers to a body that ensures quality of outsourced services. Many social services are integrated services such as supported housing with a range of support such as detoxification treatment, economic planning, coaching etc.

Box 3: Stockholm - Towards more diversity of providers

In Stockholm, a trend to diversity of providers can be observed. Procurement can take different forms:

- (1) Procurement according to law (LOU): regular process of procurement through tendering
- (2) System of choice (LOV): transfer of the choice of providers for support, care and nursing services to users; municipalities approve eligible service providers²⁸
- (3) Right to challenge: system in which anyone wishing to run an enterprise for the municipality on a contract basis can propose to take over the performance of a service

Stockholm is one of 22 municipalities (total 290) in Sweden that have adopted the *right to challenge*. The aim of the challenge right is to examine activities of the municipality, both the quality and the cost effectiveness. The biggest gain is that employees and companies can contribute to the arising of completely new and better ways to conduct local operations. The main principle is that anyone who wants to run an operation for the municipality for construction has the right to challenge the municipal activities. What aspects of municipal activities that can be challenged are determined by the municipality itself, and differ from municipality to municipality. Public authority and strategic management, however, by law or regulation cannot be challenged. A challenge should be directed to the Board which currently runs the service. The Board then decides if the challenge is accepted or not. How a Board position a challenge is determined by the laws, and more governing the activity in question.

If the Board decides that the challenge may be refused then the decision must be justified. Accepted challenge will start a process of procurement in which the person who made the initial challenge will be one of the parties. Nothing says that the one who initiated the challenge will run the business.

In Italy, the welfare system exhibits a high degree of fragmentation with benefit systems that differ according to the various population groups. It is also characterised by a dualism between 'strong' and 'weak' beneficiaries, particularly concerning: social security; a traditional predominance of cash subsidies (money transfers over direct social services); the relatively late institutionalisation of national health services (based on the principle of universal protection); and the central role of the family in compensating for deficiencies of the welfare state and providing care for vulnerable members. These limitations are exacerbated by several difficulties in the quality and delivery of services and by problems in using public resources efficiently with strong differences among regions, especially between the North and the South of the country. With regard to social services, the last decade has seen considerable decentralisation developments.

Since 2000, greater attention is given to (a) integrating social services with all other services provided to people and communities (such as educational services, cultural and

²⁸ Since 1 Jan 2009, Swedish municipalities can opt for this procedure. The procuring authority advertises on the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency website for freedom of choice systems. Both private companies and non-profit organisations may apply to become approved suppliers. The municipality regulates the criteria by means of agreements.

recreational ones) as well as with the labour market and training /activation policies and (b) to coordination and cooperation among different institutional levels, such as local governments, regions and the central state. In order to avoid territorial discrepancies in social service provision, the state, in agreement with regions, provides for quality standardisation and puts greater attention on users' needs. A debate on the definition of social services basic levels is currently ongoing.

Since 2001, regions have exclusive legislative competence in the social services field (according to the Italian understanding²⁹: social welfare services, child care, non-medical long-term care). Municipalities manage and provide social services either directly by themselves or delegate their management and the provision to other bodies such as public entities, foundations, cooperatives, associations etc. If the private sector is involved in these undertakings, then it is in many cases in mixed arrangements with public actors. In Italy, the Church and the third sector have always played a role in supporting excluded people through the delivery of services that are not in charge of the local administration. While the municipality provides social housing and first aid shelters, e.g. the NGO Caritas offer meals to homeless and excluded people, as well as clothes and health care to those without a permanent residency.

Box 4: Bologna - Bringing social services closer to the citizens

The City of Bologna is currently in a key development phase - started at the end of 2006 - that is characterised by a strong process of decentralization and subsidiarity in which the districts are acquiring more and more autonomy having achieved specific functions on social and educational services within the framework of regulations approved by the Municipality Council.

These functions are delivered by 'Social Front Offices' placed out in the 9 Bologna Districts and operating since October 2008. The 'Social Front Offices' support all citizens that are in need of help or simply want to receive information on social service provisions. They 1) arrange meetings with professional social workers; 2) give information on the requirements to obtain financial support; 3) set up procedures for obtaining fiscal and financial exemptions, financial contributions, home assistance.

At the same time, the Emilia Romagna Region constituted three Public Entities for Services to People (ASP in the Italian acronym) that will provide the social and educative services identified by the Districts to adults, minors, disabled, elderly persons. To ensure homogeneity and co-ordination between Municipality, Districts and ASP, the District Committee and the Plan Office were reinforced, the first as the place of political co-operation and the second as the place of technical liaison between those having political responsibilities and those having implementing ones. In addition, following an Agreement between Municipality of Bologna and Province of Bologna, 'Labour Front Offices' have been placed out in 3 out of the 9 Districts with the aim of being "closer" to people. These Offices are connected with the Public Employment Services Network and are able to support the labour demand-supply matching, supporting people in finding a job, and providing individualised consultancies for vocational training.

The welfare state of the Netherlands represents a combination of the conservative-corporatist and the social-democratic welfare state regime. Having traditionally been a system with universal protection, the focus of social policy changed 'from welfare to work'. Traditional solidarity interrelations within the welfare state are dissolving and individual responsibility for one's income and social protection is increasingly emphasised.

Social services in the Netherlands are highly decentralised.³⁰ Most social services are funded by the state, however commissioning lies with municipalities. In 2004, the municipalities' power has

²⁹ According to National Law 328

³⁰ In the Netherlands, the term 'social services' is very general. Social services can be considered those social services that are aimed to counteract social exclusion, by promoting social and labour participation.

increased considerably. Since then, city administrations are fully responsible for social assistance expenditure and for the way they use it - either for financial support or for offering services to people in need. At the same time, municipalities allocate/commission employment and training services that are then either run independently or contracted out to other service providers.

As for social housing, the Netherlands has a unique arrangement of non-profit providers ('corporaties') being fully responsible for funding, allocation and provision of services. In child care, the state allocates resources through tax deductions to parents in need of child care.

There is a trend towards privatization in the delivery of certain services, such as health and welfare, day-care centres and employment training organisations. However, they are often partly subsidised by the government. In child care, service commissioning and actual service delivery have almost completely been outsourced to private (non-profit) foundations and private enterprises. This is a trend that can be seen in other fields as well, such as long-term care.

In 2007, the Social Support Act ('WMO') was implemented which aims to contribute to all people being able to participate in society. Under the Act, policy responsibility for setting up social support now lies with the municipalities. Furthermore, through this combination of laws and regulations, barriers are alleviated which previously mitigated against a joint provision of client service.

Box 5: Rotterdam - Improving the local social environment

Rotterdam City Council's 4-year working plan has a primary focus on improving the local social environment by offering more Dutch language courses; attracting higher income households; creating more paid jobs; raising the general education level and by promoting participation in society.

'Joining in' and 'linking in' are key values in this approach, acknowledging the fact that there are those that are ill equipped to do so. Vulnerable citizens of Rotterdam can count on the council to provide services to improve their situation or limit the negative effects for themselves or others.

The service provision to the service user is geared towards 'activation' and improving the ability of people to address issues by themselves. Rotterdam has recently decided to increase efforts to reach families and young people that are multiply deprived and in danger of 'forfeiting futures' due to intergenerational aspects of poverty. Over the coming years a scientifically sound method will be developed.

The welfare state of the Czech Republic falls under the post-socialist regime model combining elements of different 'ideal types'. The social insurance system based on employment, which was introduced in the 1990's, is typical for the corporatist-conservative model. Also, the family is essential in welfare production in the Czech Republic. Liberal elements are to be found in the low levels of benefits that are often provided on a means-tested basis. This often results in widespread poverty and high social inequality as well as a very high dependency of individual's social protection on their employment status.

In terms of social services, the Czech Republic has recently taken a major step towards establishing a social service sector. In 2007, for the first time, social services were legally defined as social counselling, social care and social prevention services. Registration of social service providers has been introduced as a prerequisite to receive grants/funding from the municipality and/or region. A process of community planning of social services has been put in place that aims to strengthen user involvement at the planning stage (see box below). Also, more focus has been put on the quality of services. These developments leave the municipality with new tasks such as

coordinating services and service providers as well as coordinating social service planning with a number of actors.

In the Czech Republic, responsibilities for social service provision are spread over all levels of government. Municipalities share responsibilities (mostly with state and/or regions) in almost all fields of services deemed relevant within the active inclusion concept. Civil society actors hold a considerable share in the delivery of social services. Among those, Church-related organisations are, traditionally, important actors (Fiala/Mares 2008).

Box 6: Prague - Involving users in planning of social services

The community planning of social services in the Czech Republic was introduced starting in 2000, initially through a Czech-British cooperation. Since the social service reform in 2007, the community planning of social services is obligatory for Regions and voluntary for municipalities. Since then, through involving representatives of municipalities/regions, providers (individual organizations) and users local needs and resources are identified and on this basis social services are planned to cater to local specificities and individual needs. The process of community planning consists of the analysis of the current offer of social services and the needs of their clients. The result of the research becomes the background for setting up the priorities in the area of social services. The process of community planning is thus based on mapping the needs from the points of view of the contracting authority (Regions or municipalities), providers and clients (the public).

In the case of the City of Prague, which has been developing a Medium-Term Plan for Social Service Development (including the area of monitoring and evaluation of the social services, priorities for the forthcoming periods and funding requirements), uses the following procedure: The Social Services Department of the Prague City Hall is charged with the preparation of a proposed plan. Afterwards, the providers and users are called on to make comments and observations on the plan. The comments are then incorporated at a common meeting of the contracting authority, providers and the public. The amended version of the Medium-Term Plan of Social Service Development is then presented to the Council and Local Authority of the City of Prague for approval.

Table 1: Social service provision in five EU countries
Responsibilities in financing, regulation and provision, current trends

	Financing and regulation ¹	Provision ²	Main trends
CZ	Central/regional/local	not-profit providers incl. Church-related providers	Establishment of social service sector, more user involvement through community planning
IT ³	Central/regional	Municipality, third sector	Decentralisation from national to regional and local level
NL	Central/local	non-profit providers	Transfer of responsibility for social assistance to municipality
SE	Local	municipality	Diversification of providers ³¹
UK	Central/local	independent providers, often not-for-profit organisations	More integration and co-ordination of services

1 prevailing level of responsibility

2 main actors

3 Emilia-Romagna Region

³¹ This trend is particularly pronounced in Stockholm, compared to the rest of Sweden.

4. Housing in active inclusion

This chapter presents housing services in the countries and cities covered in this report. First, it examines the link of housing with active inclusion. It then outlines current housing issues. The subsequent parts examine the policy context of public/social housing. The main part of this chapter analyses the implementation of local housing services in the five countries. It aims to identify where implementation does not match the EU common principles on quality services. Finally, it sets out recommendations to address these gaps.

There are a range of approaches to addressing housing needs across the five countries studied. On the one hand, housing policies can concentrate on the provision of affordable housing (public or social housing), the promotion of home-ownership, the regulation of the housing market etc. While *supply-side subsidies* provide constructors with financial aid for building and offering housing at below-market prices, *demand-side subsidies* support low-income households with financial housing allowances to be able to afford adequate housing. On the other hand, the provision of services related to housing is often part of a broader social policy agenda. Supported housing combines housing and services aiming at providing support for adults who are - for various reasons - unable to manage independent accommodation. These can be because of physical disability problems (including in old age), mental health or addiction problems, exposure to violence etc. This includes the provision of shelters (e.g. for homeless, women exposed to violence etc.), but can also take the form of community-based support for people who are not able to live independently, advice (e.g. to prevent eviction), counseling etc. The target group for supported housing services includes permanently or temporarily homeless people, where often a number of problems have accumulated. Supported housing services for people with disabilities are often combined with medical care and will not be covered in great depth in this report.

The housing services covered in this chapter are: the physical provision of public/social housing and supported housing.³²

4.1 Relevance of housing in active inclusion

The main arguments for understanding the link between housing and exclusion from the labour market can be considered alongside three different dimensions:

- **Availability of affordable housing**

An address is often a precondition to get a job eventually determining one's ability to be economically independent. Homelessness is the most radical form of housing exclusion often being a consequence of a number of factors. (Temporarily or permanently) homeless people often encounter a set of problems that are responsible for an already existing reason for exclusion such as mental health problems, drug addiction, over-indebtedness, exposure to violence etc. - factors that are mutually reinforcing each other.

³² Cash benefits will not be covered.

- **Quality of housing**

The costs of housing (and related costs e.g. for energy) determine what is left of the household budget for other consumption, such as education and culture, or even food. This is particularly the case for people in precarious situations and on small budgets as the lower the income of a household is, the higher the share of the budget spent on housing becomes.³³ Private home-ownership can mean that costs for housing are relatively low. At the same time, it might yet limit people's inclination to move house for taking up employment as the perceived costs for moving house are too high. However, often home-ownership is not an option for people excluded from the labour market as they do not have the means to purchase a house, even at subsidised prices.

- **Housing environment (the neighbourhood)**

The local neighbourhood is particularly relevant for jobless people since social networks and availability of services contribute to social and often also to labour market participation, particularly since jobless people spend more time within their immediate environment due to a lack of work-related social contacts. However, this can be positive, when the area holds opportunities for creative activities and meaningful use of time, or negative, when it lacks such opportunities.

4.2 Current urban challenges

With regard to housing, the EUROCITIES-NLAO city partners have identified the following issues as being particular current challenges at local level:

- **Privatisation of housing resulting in issues of affordability**

A general trend over the last decades is the privatisation of public housing aiming to alleviate constraints on public budgets and, since public authorities were not able to provide adequate maintenance, to improve the quality of the housing stock. In the UK and the Czech Republic this took place through the transfer of public housing stock at reduced prices to private buyers and private housing associations. Consequently, the share of the social housing sector has decreased considerably and, in some countries, has become increasingly targeted at narrower sections of the population.

As a result, demand for affordable housing now exceeds supply. For instance, in Southampton, currently 13.000 people are on waiting lists for social housing, while only ten per cent are actually eligible. This raises questions about the adequacy of allocation criteria in identifying those in need of social housing. In Bologna, for instance, where the demand for social as well as supported housing is growing and creating problems of economic instability, national methodologies and tools are deemed insufficient in precisely assessing individual needs. A debate on the development of new criteria and indicators has just started.

In Eastern European countries affordability issues are strongly linked to consequences of the transition from a socialist to a market-economy. In Prague, the upcoming deregulation of rents by 2012 is expected to cause particularly vulnerable people (mostly older people, but also

³³ Within the 20% of the households with the lowest income, the average share of the budget spent on housing reaches 37% with housing costs representing on average 33% of the total household consumption (EUROSTAT 2008).

families with low income and single parents) to move out of the more desirable city centre apartments to find affordable housing elsewhere since they will not be able to afford higher rents that will be charged for such properties. The Czech government has responded in 2009 with new state grants for social housing.

- **Growing social segregation within cities**

A common feature of many European cities is the growing spatial concentration of disadvantaged people. Within urban areas in particular, the people representing the extremes of the social structure tend to live in certain localities: while the better-off voluntarily separate themselves, poorer people are often forced to live in involuntary segregation through housing market mechanism and other factors. For various economic and demographic reasons (impact of de-industrialisation on local labour markets, level of immigration) social segregation has been a particular problem for some decades in the North-Western parts of Europe (Andersson & Musterd 2005: 382; Atkinson 2007). Finding adequate responses to these challenges is often problematic. In Stockholm, for instance, various attempts have been made over time to tackle spatial segregation, but this did not bring about the desired results. In Rotterdam, where providing a social mix is a stated objective of social housing (and where different income groups pay different rents), the perception of the quality of the housing environment is an important factor determining to the extent to which a neighbourhood attracts higher income people who then contribute with a higher rent. This in turn can improve the quality of the housing environment. How this vicious circle can be broken, remains a challenge given the limited budgets.

- **Structural challenges changing the profile of housing services users**

Structural changes (demographic ageing, increased migration, employment instability, the lifestyles changes resulting e.g. in more single-person households, processes of family-breakdowns and re-composition) require adequate solutions at local level. For public/social housing, this means that a changing profile of social housing tenants requires modifications in the housing stock, e.g. (re)construction of smaller flats and/or accessible flats, providing additional services to support the elderly etc. For supported housing, these structural changes are reflected in a feminisation of homelessness as well as in a growth in service users with a foreign passport (mainly from Eastern European countries but also from non-EU countries) among those frequenting homeless shelters in Western European cities. Furthermore, cities report an increase in young adults among homeless, in Southampton e.g. young males as result of family breakdowns.

4.3 Policy context of public/social and supported housing

This section analyses the policy and institutional frameworks for public/social housing as well as supported housing.

4.3.1 Public/social housing

The following section discusses public/social housing policies as well as the distribution of responsibilities in public/social housing in the countries covered in this report. The focus is on the

(physical) provision of public/social housing and community development as a ‘territorial’ dimension of housing distribution.

Policy approaches

There is no single definition of ‘public/social housing’ in Europe. Rather, concepts vary across countries in terms of size of the public/social housing sector, legal and organisational forms or modes of ‘governance’, forms of ‘social tenures’, and the overarching policy framework in which these actors operate (Czischke/Pittini 2007: 14).

In Italy, social housing has until recently followed the original Western European tradition of social housing providing workers with decent and affordable housing. However, the sector has become ever smaller as at the same time many people were able to afford home-ownership. Only in 2007 the government defined the concept of social housing, for the first time³⁴, as a response to a rising demand for rented accommodation, due to demographic changes as well as changes on the job market requiring more rented housing stock. Efforts for new construction have followed.

In the UK, housing policy in the 1980s introduced the ‘right-to-buy’ legislation which offered public housing at reduced prices to eligible tenants increasing the already high share of home-ownership in the UK. Following the considerable reduction of public housing stock, the government started to target social housing only on the most vulnerable. This in turn resulted in a ‘residualisation’ of social housing becoming an option of ‘last resort’ eventually leading to stigmatisation of the sector and people living on social housing estates.

In the Netherlands, the social housing sector dominates the housing market more than anywhere else in Europe. In 1995, the social housing stock and all government funds designated to social housing were completely transferred to not-for-profit organisations (‘corporaties’) that act as social partners. In order to facilitate their financial independent status, their obligations are regulated by law - for instance investing in services to get residents more involved with their community or increasing their participation in the community. This may include employment schemes and providing possibilities to contribute by doing voluntary work.

In Sweden, after WW II public/social housing was developed as part of the general welfare system. The social welfare policy built up was general and aimed at providing everybody with decent and affordable housing, not just specific target groups. Generally, this approach has been followed consistently until today. This universal approach is illustrated by the fact that the term ‘social housing’ is not used, but is referred to as ‘public housing’.

In the Czech Republic, as in many Eastern European countries, the concept of ‘social housing’ is gradually establishing itself again after the fall of the socialist regime. However, officially, the term ‘social housing’ is not used.³⁵

Despite variations in policy concepts, groups of countries share certain commonalities across Europe with respect to the provision of public/social housing, particularly regarding the allocation approach

³⁴ According to the Ministerial Decree of 22 April 2008, § 2 of the Decree social housing is defined as “a housing unit intended for residential use, permanently rented, functioning in the general interest for the protection of social cohesion and the reduction of housing discomfort for disadvantaged individuals and families unable to obtain access to rented accommodation on the free market”, § 3 extends the description to “all buildings created or restored by public and private operators with recourse to public contributions or support [...], intended for at least eight years’ temporary rental and also for ownership”.

³⁵ Except for VAT purposes

and the share of the public/social housing sector and home-ownership. In terms of the scope of public/social housing, two approaches can be distinguished across European countries (cf. Czischke/Pittini 2007; building on Kemeny 1995).

Public/social housing can be provided on a universal basis. In Sweden, housing is considered a public responsibility and is delivered through municipal housing companies. In the Netherlands, public/social housing is de-facto provided to a relatively broad group of people.³⁶ Provision is carried out by not-for-profit organisations. In this *universalistic approach*, the public/social housing sector has a market-regulating function in order to ensure that everybody has access to affordable housing of decent quality (e.g. through rent control). The rental sector has a significant size in these countries. Public/social housing is allocated through waiting lists with the municipalities reserving a number of vacancies for households with urgent needs. A key objective of this approach is to ensure a social mix, i.e. to avoid socio-spatial segregation and to foster social cohesion.

A different approach is taken in countries where it is assumed that the demand for housing will be met predominantly by the private market. Here, only those for whom the market is not able to deliver housing of decent quality, benefit from social housing. Within this *targeted approach*, two sub-types can be distinguished according to the allocation criteria that are employed. In the first sub-type, social housing is provided to people mainly on basis of their income, which has to be below a certain threshold. This is the case in Italy and the Czech Republic following the Western European tradition of social housing provision directed at workers and employees. In the second sub-type, social housing is allocated on the basis of need, i.e. only to a relatively restricted category of particularly vulnerable people, such as in the UK.³⁷

Table 2: Composition of housing stock

Share (in %) of	CZ	IT	NL	SE	UK
Home-ownership	66	73	54	54	69
Private rented	13	14	11	22	10
Social rented	20 ³⁸	5	35	21	21
Other	1	8	0	3	0

Source: Czischke/Pittini 2007

Over the last decades, in most countries covered in this report, but particularly in those with targeted approaches, the public/social housing sector has become considerably smaller since large parts of the public housing stock have been sold out to private buyers. As a result, in those countries home-ownership became a prevalent feature of the housing market while the rented

³⁶ Social housing is provided to people whose income lies under a certain threshold. However, there is no monitoring on income evolution or subsequent eviction from properties when the family income increases above the threshold. Because of the quality of social housing and the costs of alternative accommodation the incentives to move out are low. Many social housing tenants have an income above the income threshold. Hence, ultimately the social housing is occupied by a very broad group of people.

³⁷ In UK, preference is given to the following groups: people who are homeless; people occupying insanitary, overcrowded, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing; people who need to move for medical or welfare reasons, including ground relating to a disability; people who need to move to a particular location, e.g. to be nearer to special training opportunities, or special medical facilities, and who would suffer hardship if they were unable to do so.

³⁸ In the 1990s, the central government retained strong security for sitting tenants in public housing allowing them permanent tenure at low rent. The housing stock is still being labeled 'social housing' even though it lacks the perspective of flat-users. A more serious definition of 'social housing' shows that real social housing represents only a very marginal part of the total Czech housing stock (Lux/Grabmüllerová 2008).

sector became relatively smaller. In contrast, in those countries with a universalistic approach, the rented sector is of significant size, including private and social rented, while home-ownership remains relatively small (see table 2).

Governance arrangements

Actors in public/social housing and distribution of responsibilities

An overview of actors involved in public/social housing shows the diversity of governance arrangements in place in the five countries covered in this study:

Table 3: Distribution of responsibilities in public/social housing provision

	CZ	IT ¹	NL	SE	UK
Programming	State, municipality	Region, province, municipality	State, municipality, corporations	State, municipality	State, region, municipality
Funding	State, ² region, municipality	State, region	Corporations, state	Municipality	State, municipality ³
Commissioning/ allocation	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality, Corporations	Municipal housing companies	State, municipality
Provision	Municipality	Municipality, local public companies, private enterprises & investors	Corporations	Municipal housing companies, private landlords	Municipality, local housing associations

1 Emilia-Romagna Region

2 state provides grant to municipality

3 national funding = new housing; municipal funding = services

Dark blue: municipality exercises exclusive competence

light blue: municipality shares responsibility; leading actor in bold

Source: LAOs Bologna, Prague, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Southampton

In Sweden, where municipalities benefit from the bulk of tax income, they (and the municipal housing companies) are almost autonomous in the programming, allocation and provision of public housing. The degree of autonomy depends on the political context. The State sets the legislative and regulative framework and provides resources at times when there is a need for more rented homes or for specific projects, e.g. community development.

Also the Netherlands has moved towards a highly decentralized system since, in 1995, the Dutch state devolved responsibilities for social housing to the local level, sharing general programming functions with the ‘corporaties’ and municipalities. State subsidies terminated in 1995. Not-for-profit organisations are financially independent, they own and manage social housing provision. However, the municipality has a leading role in the allocation of social housing by assigning plots to and coordinating efforts with the corporations into performance agreements.

Since 1997, in Italy social housing is a competence of the regional authorities that cooperate on social housing issues with municipalities, and on the programming level also with the provinces.

Allocation is completely up to the municipalities. Resources aimed at building new housing stock comes from the national government, as does funding for running existing housing stock, however it is channeled through the regions.

In the Czech Republic, following the collapse of the socialist system in the early 1990s, the competence for social housing policies was devolved mainly to municipalities, though the state is still involved in programming and funding.³⁹ State grants are provided for social housing construction or re-construction, the regions ensure the distribution of the grants.

In the UK, social housing is delivered through 'social landlords' such as local authorities and housing associations, both owning and managing social housing. The social housing sector is still largely funded by central government (through the 'Housing and Communities Agency') which provides funding for new social housing, but is mediated by strong locally coordinated plans. Regular state funding is provided for specific purposes, depending on the region. Housing partnerships involving, amongst other local partners, local housing associations shape local housing strategies.

4.3.2 Supported housing

The following sections examine the policy and institutional frameworks of supported housing services, with a particular focus on homelessness and on the role of the municipality.

Policy approaches

Traditionally, homeless people were taken care of mainly by charity organisations. With the introduction of the welfare state a diversification of services to specific target groups took place. Nowadays, approaches in tackling homelessness are shaped by practical experience as well as theoretical social policy positions. New concepts are being developed and, if deemed successful, adopted elsewhere. For example, the '*housing ladder*' is a commonly applied approach in the provision of housing support. It provides for support to homeless people in stages with levels of support decreasing the more a person can live independently. Not everyone has to go through all stages of support. A competing model is the '*housing first*' approach - a relatively recent innovation in social policy, first developed in the United States. Here the assumption is that providing people first with a home and then bringing in services to support their daily lives, supports individuals better on their path to more independence. In most countries covered in this report, both concepts co-exist with the UK focusing more on the 'housing first' concept. In Sweden and Italy (in the case of Bologna), emphasis is on the 'housing ladder'. However, in Sweden, 'housing first' is being introduced on a trial basis.

The issue of homelessness has increased on the European and Member States' agendas. In a number of countries such as Netherlands and Sweden as well as in the UK, governments have put in place comprehensive, multidimensional strategies with integrated approaches. These strategies are

³⁹ According to Lux/Grabmueller (2008), the devolvement of competences to the local level in the 1990s was, at least partly, only rhetorical since central decision-makers kept their dominance through preserving privileges for existing occupants of public housing.

translated at local level allowing for adaptation to specific local contexts. In the UK central government provides the framework within which local authorities are required to develop their own homelessness strategies. In Sweden and the Netherlands, the state “only” facilitates policy action, acting as a driver of support and stimulation of local organisations in their work and provides opportunities for exchange and benchmarking between cities. In other countries such as the Czech Republic and Italy, there is no overall strategic approach, but working with the homeless is part of the general task of social services, together with a range of other target groups that are catered for by social services in general.

Governance arrangements

Actors and distribution of responsibilities

An overview of the main actors involved in supported housing shows the diversity of governance arrangements in place in the five countries covered in this study:

Table 4: Distribution of responsibilities in supported housing services

	CZ	IT ¹	NL	SE	UK
Programming	State, region, municipality	State, region, province, municipality	Municipality	Municipality	State, municipality
Funding	EU, state, region, municipality	State, region, municipality	State, municipality	Municipality	State
Commissioning/ allocation	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality, care agency	Municipality	Municipality
Provision	Municipality and organisations established by Municipalities, NGOs	Municipality, public utility, NGOs	NGOs	Municipality, private providers, NGOs	Municipality, third sector, private sector, social enterprise

¹ Emilia-Romagna Region

Dark blue: municipality exercises exclusive competence

Light blue: municipality shares responsibility; leading actor in bold

Source: LAOs Bologna, Prague, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Southampton

In Sweden, municipalities have exclusive responsibility in all stages of supported housing provision. The state can set national frameworks to stimulate and support local actions, however municipalities are autonomous in service provision. Municipalities deliver most of supported housing services by themselves, however increasingly delegate provision to other organisations such as private providers/NGOs.

In Italy, in the case of Emilia-Romagna Region or the City of Bologna respectively, recent reforms have reorganised social service provision. The State has the task of defining levels for actions concerning civil and social rights, laying down minimum requirements for the organisation of social services and - together with the regions - sharing out financial resources. Programming

functions are shared among the regions, provinces and municipalities. Services are run and provided not only by public entities, but also by non-profit organisations. Municipalities either run social services directly or delegate management to such organisations.

In the UK, supported housing services are commissioned by municipalities. Central government provides funding and sets out the national framework of support services. Programming functions are carried out in partnership with the central state, regions and municipalities. These partnerships are monitored through Local Area Agreements (LAA). The municipality delivers few services itself and purchases provision of services mainly from third sector organisations.

In the Netherlands, municipalities manage most competences in supported housing provision. They are responsible for the programming of supported housing, on the basis of needs assessments carried out by them and outsourced to research institutes. The national government sets out housing strategies that the municipality focuses and tailors to the specific needs and objectives of its area, creating a local housing strategy with its own aims and targets.

In the Czech Republic, the recent social service reform brought about significant changes in the field of social services (see section 3.2.1) also redefining the roles of actors. State, region and municipalities are involved in programming. Financial resources come from the state and are transferred through the region to the municipality, both of which also provide minor own funding. Few supported housing services are delivered by the municipality itself, others are delegated either to semi-budgetary organisations - set up (and funded) by the municipalities - but mainly to NGOs.

4.4 Local implementation in public/social and supported housing

This section analyses in what way the EU quality principles (see section 2.1.1) are reflected in the local implementation of policies on public/social and supported housing services. The section is structured alongside these six common principles. Each subsection sets out:

- the common principle as set out by the EC
- a possible interpretation of the principle as understood within the EUROCITIES-NLAO project
- main trends in the implementation of this principle, illustrated by local practices
- challenges from implementation
- recommendations to address implementation gaps

4.4.1 Territorial availability, physical accessibility, affordability

Principle 1

as set out by the EC: Territorial availability, physical accessibility, affordability

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

Public/social housing is available in different geographical areas, and affordable and available in particular for 'people excluded from the labour market'. Facilities are accessible to disabled users. Provisions are in place facilitating the availability and accessibility of supported housing services (e.g. central intake).

Main trends

Lack of social housing

Most cities across Europe either already experience or anticipate problems with the availability and affordability of public/social housing that meets the increasingly diverse needs of their citizens and is flexible enough to adapt to changing demand patterns. In some countries (CZ, UK) privatisation of public housing stock has contributed to this lack of social housing. Privatisation can facilitate citizens to buy homes at subsidised prices and thus enable people to accumulate their own capital resources. However, privatisation also leads to a considerable reduction of the public/social housing stock, which is particularly relevant for those people who cannot afford to buy a house, even at subsidised prices, and depend on social housing. In other countries (IT) the focus of policies on home-ownership has left the social housing sector neglected.

One-entry points facilitate access to supported housing services

The access of the individual to the services available is often facilitated through one-stop-shop types of services, i.e. one-entry points for each user to proceed to the appropriate service (IT, NL, for UK see Box 10).

'Principle of residence' limits freedom of supported housing users

Cities do not always have enough resources to provide everyone with all services needed. In order to come to a fair share of (financial) responsibility between municipalities, in some countries (NL, SE) policies include a 'principle of residence', restricting clients to home municipalities or districts.

Challenges

- The increasing flexibility of labour markets is a new challenge for cities: a successful coordination of economic development and housing policies would require foresight planning of affordable housing in areas designated for economic development as well as improved geographical transferability of public/social housing tenancy rights, both within and beyond the borders of a single local authority.
- The fact that different types of (supported) housing are needed for different user profiles and during different stages of the re-integration process of the clients requires cities to guarantee availability of appropriate facilities.
- Cities are often the first at having to respond to changing needs. Often, they have to adapt quickly to new challenges, while national frameworks have not yet done so.
- Cities continue to attract homeless people from other parts of the country. Generally, the 'principle of residence' is considered an appropriate tool to help alleviate financial pressure on particularly 'attractive' cities. However, it does counter the individual movement of people (e.g. to find work) creates inequalities among service users in the country since the level of service provision differs in between cities.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- Local economic development policies need to link up with housing policy; new policies and tools need to be put in place that allow for greater mobility within public/social housing as a response to changing labour markets.
- Further privatisation of public housing policies should be considered carefully with regard to their impact on the availability of social housing.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- Cities need to be able to rely on a stable funding framework for public/social housing in order to build strategic, long-term approaches and guarantee availability.
- National policy and governance frameworks need to be designed in a way that empowers local authorities to develop policies that are tailored to changing local demand.
- Legal and organisational instruments should be developed at national level that make the transfer of tenancy rights in public/social housing between different locations possible.
- The consequences the ‘principle of residence’ of the across municipalities have to be tracked to detect any negative impacts on service users.

4.4.2 Equal opportunities for service users and due account for diversity of users

Principle 2

as set out by the EC: Solidarity, equal opportunities for service users and employees, and due account for diversity of users

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

Solidarity as a principle is applied in the allocation of public/social housing targeting those most in need. Provision of public/social housing takes into due account different characteristics/requirements of users (linked to e.g. religion, ethnicity, age, gender etc.) and ensures non-discrimination (no social group is refused access to public/social housing). Supported housing services provide low-threshold access and take into account different characteristics/requirements of users (linked to religion, ethnicity, age, gender, learning disabilities etc).

Main trends

Segregation and stigmatisation in public/social housing through privatisation policies

The considerable reduction of public housing stock through privatisation also created social segregation since privatisation of more attractive and accessible dwellings/estates concentrate vulnerable groups in less attractive areas with housing less accessible and less suited to their needs.

Unequal access to public/social housing

Across Europe, there is unequal access to public/social housing thereby compromising the principle of solidarity for those most in need. Public/social housing is becoming more difficult to access by the most vulnerable groups for a variety of reasons including:

- Competition with 'better-off' groups in the face of increasing shortage due to privatisation
- Difficulties in access to public/social housing for some social groups (CZ, SE)
- Trend for long-term tenancy in social/public housing even if income increases above allocation thresholds
- Inflexible regular housing markets preventing moving out of public/social/public housing
- Cities not having the power to cater for undocumented migrants

There are a number of tools to improve access to public/social housing for the most vulnerable:

- (Legally defined) quota for specific target groups (IT, NL)
- Allocation criteria and procedures designed to prioritise those in need (CZ, NL, UK)
- Commissioning/procurement processes designed to secure user needs and accessibility of services to different types of users (SE)

More efficiency in the provision of supported housing

New ways of commissioning supported housing have been established, aiming to ensure a more efficient delivery of social services closer to the citizens. This process takes different forms in the cities covered in this report, each redefining the role of the municipality:

- through extending ways of commissioning out services to a broader group of providers, e.g. Stockholm (see Box 4 in chapter 3.2.1). Thus they aim to provide the users with a larger choice of good-quality services, but also to better meet the needs of specific target groups for which the municipality might not have the capacity to provide services under its own auspices;
- through entrusting public entities (established by the municipality) with the delivery of services (e.g. Bologna and Prague) with the aim to deliver services in a more efficient manner
- through reorganising third sector providers and bringing together different funding streams, e.g. Southampton (see Box 10) and Rotterdam.

Challenges

- For both social and supported housing, cities are not always able to adapt services to the changing profile of user patterns (e.g. increase of homeless people, increased demand from young people and migrants). A particular group that falls out of the focus is the "working poor" - allocation criteria are not designed to cater for this group. This becomes particularly apparent in the current economic crisis.
- For needs assessments to be valid they have to adapt quickly to changing profiles and problems. However, criteria and indicators are not always deemed appropriate.

- The accessibility to public/social and supported housing also depends on having the right information at hand. Reaching out to those social groups in need of these services is often a challenge.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- It is crucial that cities continue to implement measures to ensure that information on public/social and supported housing services are processed effectively, e.g. multilingual information, diverse communication channels etc.
- Diversified and changing user requirements need diverse responses. Cities need to be empowered to put in place tools and processes that allow them to understand needs and monitor trends (particularly related to employment market changes) in order to create the capacity to respond flexibly to new challenges and implement innovative approaches to meet the needs of new user groups. This might include the development of new criteria and indicators, which reflect better the profile of people in need.
- Though governments respond to upcoming needs for new social housing (CZ, IT), particularly in those countries where the social housing sector is relatively small, people furthest away from the labour market risk being neglected, if at the same time allocation policies are not developed appropriately.
- Further privatisation of public housing policies should be considered carefully with regard to their impact on social segregation.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- Exchange on a national and/or European scale can help in designing commissioning and planning processes to encourage greater flexibility/mobility in supported housing provision.
- Cities need to be empowered to provide adequate housing services to particularly vulnerable target groups such as undocumented migrants.

4.4.3 Investment in human capital, working conditions and physical infrastructures

Principle 3

as set out by the EC: Investment in human capital, working conditions and adequate physical infrastructures

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

Adequate investment is taken in working conditions and professional development of public/social and supported service delivery staff. Since this principle refers to the quality of the service itself including staff training, for the particular nature of social housing as the physical provision of housing, this principle can also be interpreted as covering investment in the quality of social housing. This would not only include investment in the maintenance of social housing stock, but also investment aimed at improving the housing environment, i.e. urban regeneration and community development.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This section refers to this interpretation. However, community development has also clear links with principle 4 on coordination and integration of services. Also, project-internal discussions revealed some unclarity with regard to the term 'human capital'. The need to clarify the meaning of the principles is also highlighted in the conclusion of this report (chapter 5).

Main trends

Investment in housing stock

In most countries studied, the state provides investment in construction and maintenance of public/social housing stock. In the Czech Republic and Italy, just recently the state has approved grants for (re-)construction in social housing due to the emergence of new social housing needs. In addition, in the Czech Republic, EU funding⁴¹ is being used to focus on local problems in the areas of infrastructure, public administration and urban development. One exception with regard to state investment is the Netherlands, where, since the mid-1990s, there has not been any government investment in new social housing. However, government funding is still used for urban renewal.

Community development approaches are further developing

Community development aims to improve disadvantaged areas through investment and involvement of citizens. Funding for these projects is often a mixture of state- and municipal funding.

Up to now, projects often remain limited in terms of their outcomes, which might be linked to projects focusing on either physical improvements or other issues such as improving schools and employment measures. At the same time, citizens' involvement has not been properly developed. Therefore, a new generation of projects apply a more comprehensive and coordinated approach in supporting the situation of people in disadvantaged areas through both physical improvement and improvement of other issues such as education, employment opportunities etc. Boxes 7 and 8 present examples of such efforts in Bologna and Rotterdam. See also see Box 11 'Järvadialogen' in Stockholm.

Box 7: 'Laboratorio Mercato' in Bologna

'Laboratorio Mercato' was a framework project promoted by Bologna City Council from February 2004 until November 2005 about the urban regeneration of a vast area of the city previously used as fruit and vegetable market.

The City Council, having recognized the need to plan this space in a transparent and participatory way, had called up the involvement of local associations and neighborhoods, technical urban experts as well as interested citizens within the 'Laboratorio Mercato' framework. The aim was to provide a discussion framework of ideas for the urban re-qualification of the area with a view to improve the provision of new quality services while achieving energy sustainability and high environmental standards.

At first, the local administration had developed and presented a regeneration plan to the shareholders of 'Laboratorio Mercato'. Then all the participants in the framework project had been involved in site-visits, discussions of data in assemblies, joint workshops with technical experts in order to draw up a new re-qualification plan that would take into account the demands of the citizens living in the area and of the challenges highlighted by the stakeholders working in the area. Still some elements of the plan had remained unresolved, namely the structure of public spaces, the new school and the green areas. Therefore, a second phase of meetings was put into place with EU funds obtained through the European project Grow-Relemcom and with the participation of extra technical experts and young people to brainstorm and design possible spatial alternatives. On the basis of the proposed options and possible solutions the city administration adopted a final regeneration plan that meets the consent of the end users and service providers and was presented in 2007 to all the citizens during a district fair.

⁴¹ 'Integrated Operational Programme' (IOP)

Box 8: The Netherlands/Rotterdam - Improving the neighbourhood in 'Vogelaar-areas'

In the Netherlands, in 2007 the national government has appointed 40 areas throughout the country as 'areas in need' requiring specific efforts at five main points: housing, employment, education, integration and (public) safety. Of these so-called 'Vogelaar-areas' (named after the former responsible minister) seven are located in Rotterdam. The aim is to improve the quality of life in these areas significantly over the next eight to ten years. In general, investments into neighbourhood work and facilities and improving environment conditions are predominantly aimed at residents that are currently living there but should also attract new residents bringing in higher incomes and spending.

In Southern and Eastern Europe, where there has not been such a pronounced tradition of community development (apparently due to a later emergence of social segregation problems along ethnicity lines), initiatives remain scarce and rather experimental. In Italy for instance, community development projects constitute scattered attempts made by cooperatives rather than by the municipality itself, e.g. the Bologna cooperative Coop Dozza. However, the municipality often supports those initiatives, e.g. usually cooperatives have agreements with municipalities to buy the land on which they can build. An exception is the 'Laboratorio Mercato' (see Box 7 above), which also entailed a high degree of citizens' participation.

Regular skills development in place

In general, investments in skills development of delivery staff in social and supported housing happens on a regular basis both by services provided by the municipality as well as by commissioned providers.

Challenges

- In general, policies aiming at social mix remain rather limited in results. Social segregation remains a persistent challenge in cities.
- The development towards single contact points for users providing access to a diversity of services (valid both for social and for supported housing, see section 4.4.4) means that delivery staff need to manage more complex and diverse requests. This needs to be reflected in skill development programmes that need to cater for more generic skills and competencies.
- Staff in social and supported housing have to deal with a very heterogeneous group of users. Changing profiles of users require staff to adapt their skills accordingly, e.g. an increase of migrants requires skills of working in a multicultural environment.
- The trend for increased personalisation of services changes the traditional ways of service delivery. Service delivery needs to be redesigned towards everyday interaction with users; staff needs to learn to develop services in a dialogue with users.
- The need for implementing meaningful user involvement (see section 4.4.5) requires municipalities and service providers to have the skills to develop innovative approaches.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- With the increasing diversity of suppliers of housing and related services, it becomes more and more important to integrate requirements for appropriate staff skills and regular staff training needs into commissioning practices.
- New types of skills are required for staff in order to develop the competence to implement the idea of user empowerment. This holds in particular for supported housing services.
- To monitor developments in disadvantaged/segreated areas would help cities to learn from experience.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- Cities need to be given the opportunity to learn from each other in developing staff skills.
- Member States and EU should develop funding instruments that allow cities to integrate place-based and people-based interventions

4.4.4 Coordination and integration of services

Principle 4

as set out by the EC: Comprehensive and coordinated services, conceived and delivered in an integrated manner

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

- Public/social housing is coordinated with services other than the provision of physical housing and provided to the user in an integrated manner.
- Supported housing services are coordinated with other types of services (e.g. employment, education) and provided to the user in an integrated manner. Examples are integrated chain approaches, one-stop-shop types of services.

Main trends

Increasing cooperation with a range of actors

Due to an increased 'welfare mix' municipalities coordinate with a growing number of actors in housing provision. Cooperation happens either vertically 'upwards' to provincial and regional authorities (IT) or to the central government (UK) and/or horizontally to providers operating in the local context (housing associations or enterprises, NL, UK).

Horizontally, European municipalities work with a range of actors such as community and faith groups, local police and fire and rescue services, charity groups, businesses, schools and health bodies, e.g. SE, UK. A new development is the agreement and delivery of cross-border multi-area agencies (UK) bringing together different municipalities, public and other sectoral partners to work towards agreed goals. However, in general, cooperation with private actors is less well established.

Recent reforms have brought about new coordination (CZ) or reinforced traditional cooperation (IT). In the Czech Republic, for instance, the social service reform has made

community planning obligatory for the Regions in order to coordinate with other actors during the social services planning process. As for municipalities, so far only a number have introduced such planning.

Different types of cooperation exist

Coordination of stakeholders and funds differs in terms of regulation (formal, informal), level of regulation (local, national) and time span (temporary, permanent).

Co-operations are formal in the Netherlands where housing providers ('corporations') are considered 'social partners' who are being consulted regularly on issues related to housing, or in the UK where local authorities engage with housing associations to work in formal Local Housing Partnerships.

In other cities, cooperation might be only loose and in some cases de-facto non-existent, even when established by law. In Italy for instance, the regional laws of the Emilia-Romagna Region provide for specified competencies for all the involved actors (Regions, Provinces and Municipalities). However, in practice, there is little real partnership co-ordination between the organisations.

One example of a project-specific partnership coordination can be found in the Netherlands, where six ministries (Education, Social Affairs, Health, Economic Affairs, Justice and the Home Office) and the Home Secretary being the co-ordinating member of cabinet, engage in a coordinated effort to develop particularly sensitive communities (see Box 7 'Vogelaar-areas').

Housing providers widening their scope of activities

As a result of the changing profile of social housing tenants (e.g. more older people), in most cases, public/social housing provision goes beyond pure provision of dwellings. In the UK, housing providers are integrating the provision of services within the provision of dwellings. Therefore, in some instances, housing associations exercise the role as specialist providers for people with specific needs, e.g. through offering sheltered 'care-related' housing.

In the Netherlands, broadening the scope of housing providers is also a result of housing associations taking on a pronounced 'social responsibility'. Following a debate on the role of social housing⁴² they established their identity as 'social enterprises' with a long-term responsibility towards the creation of a civil society. To this end, Dutch housing corporations have broadened their activities beyond housing provision to other fields such as employment, education and care, to encourage social cohesion and empowerment of residents (Czischke/Pittini 2007: 70). They are financially independent and may indeed promote a limited amount of high income buildings, the proceeds of which are directed to enlarge their capacity in social housing.

Furthermore, facing increasing economic pressure housing providers take measures to ensure their own financial sustainability. One example is the Netherlands where the housing corporations offer commercial activities so as to ensure the provision of social housing and related services to vulnerable people (Czischke/Pittini 2007: 70).

⁴² The debate questioned the compatibility of funding of social housing with European rules on State aid and the Internal Market. As a result of this debate, the EC and the Dutch Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning reached agreement on the corporations' eligibility criteria for State Aid. The corporations have the obligation to provide for the lower income families with income up to 33.000 Euro (90% of their portfolio must consist out of homes for this larger target group).

Box 9: An integrated Social Housing project: Villaggio Barona, Milan

The Villaggio Barona, started in 2003, is a development promoted by a charitable Foundation (the owner of the area affected by the urban improvement development) and by certain local non-profit organizations in order to tackle the lack of public housing policies in recent decades, in particular for families with low and very low incomes and immigrants. For immigrants, the housing problem is combined with that of work and integration in the local community and service network.

Apart from houses let at reduced rents, the village has an integrated low-cost hostel for students and young workers, a series of socio-welfare services open to the city and a public park for the zone. Voluntary and Cooperative associations involved in running the various services provide those persons and families most in difficulty with a support network able to assist in the different aspects of living. The charitable Foundation coordinates the various activities, including assignment of dwellings, taking as its starting point an agreement signed with the Municipality of Milan. The entire 'village' has not benefited from public resources either for its building or its running: it is economically self-sufficient.

The families lodged in the apartments are helped in managerial matters by other supporting families living within the Village. The services for the elderly, children and the physically impaired are aimed at the zone as a whole but may, if necessary, be used also by the families living inside the village in the context of a strategic network that gathers the resources available in the territory according to a perspective of local welfare and neighbourly service.

Around ten of the families living in the dwellings have found work inside the village itself and their daily contact with these situations increases the effectiveness of the supporting work done by the volunteers.

Since 2003, 25 foreign families have been living within the 'Villaggio Barona' together with 55 Italian families in dwellings let at rents equal to a third of average market levels. Many of these families, as a result of having a home and a friendly social context, have been able to develop projects for work autonomy as well as that of housing.

The Villaggio Barona' houses a total of around 500 people; 80 families have a regular rent contract and can count on a territorial support network in case of necessity. The development is not addressed exclusively to persons in difficulty; the village is therefore seen as a resource and an opportunity for all those living in the quarter and represents today one of the social and cultural points of reference for the southern zone of the city of Milan.

More integrated service approaches in supported housing

Coordination and integration of supported housing services with other services is necessary to combat a multidimensional phenomenon such as homelessness. Consequently, the integration of services is particularly developed in those countries that have developed comprehensive homelessness strategies (SE, NL, UK). Other than this, access for the individual to the services available is facilitated through one-stop shop types of services, i.e. one-entry points for each user to proceed to the appropriate service (IT, NL, UK). In this context, the City of Southampton has developed a new model of service delivery within the 'Supporting People' programme (see Box 10 below). By redesigning the provision and packaging the services it allowed better co-ordinated delivery and more flexibility in use of resources. At the same time, information about demand and flows through the services is captured enabling refinements to improve efficiency and to identify changing patterns of need.

Box 10: Southampton - Integration of services for homeless people

The City Council of Southampton faced a number of challenges in managing the homeless services including:

- 30 separate services provided by 11 different organisations.
- little co-ordination with neighbouring Authorities creating difficulties for homeless people moving from area to area, and for providers delivering services across authority boundaries.
- high costs of provision
- little investment in either preventative or resettlement services

With both strategic and operational issues that included:

- 74% of departures from hostels were unplanned.
- 59%, repeat homelessness.
- No central database about residents or their support needs with different approaches to managing access to hostels.
- The proportion of residents moving on to independent accommodation was 11%, showing little focus on finding longer term solutions to homelessness.

After a consultation period, which included current and ex- service users, a new service delivery model was designed that included

- a single gateway with an initial assessment followed by referral on to a range of services
- preventative services such as housing advice, floating support, reconnection and mediation services
- generic supported housing for low level needs, including developing life skills
- specialist supported housing to provide more intensive support for specific needs
- emergency accommodation if required that day.

This model is managed by the Street Homeless Prevention Team (SHPT) with service delivery being commissioned and awarded on a 3-year contract. With the introduction of a single access point, an initial assessment and effective client records, tailored pathways could be identified and supported by all the providers. Data captured has enabled refinements to improve efficiency and to identify changing patterns of need. Performance is monitored to identify effective operational practice and highlight changing patterns of demand. By redesigning the provision it brought together a number of separate services to operate collectively. By packaging these services it allowed better co-ordinated delivery and more flexibility in use of resources e.g. a single service using a single assessment and support planning system enables information to travel with the resident therefore retaining an effective and positive relationship with the individual. Other than this, a single housing related support service covering a number of homelessness hostels could distribute staff in response to absences or changes in the numbers of residents.

Challenges

- The functioning of cooperation depends on a number of factors: existing traditions of cooperation in a particular context, potential shifts in leadership, time and space cooperation is given in the set-up of a project.
- The integration of services can create benefits for cities due to increased efficiency (fewer providers). However, as a result, when specialist providers do not survive competition, some groups of users might fall through the net of services.
- Cities' experience shows that linking housing services with employment services entails a risk that people move out of (disadvantaged) areas once they find a job and then are replaced by others without employment. As a result, the unemployment rate in the affected area continues to remain high.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- In order to meet emerging trends in an integrated manner, cities have not only to increasingly provide for coordination of public/social housing policy with other social services such as childcare and employment, but also beyond including: transport planning, schools, police etc.
- Policies related to housing need to link up with local economic development policies in order to avoid out-migration of those people who enter employment.
- Programming of policies and projects should provide for time and space for a process of establishing a sustainable partnership that leads to successful coordination. National funding for projects that is provided on a long-term basis and as part of comprehensive, long-term strategies is crucial.
- In order to manage the impact of the economic crisis, cities may need to experiment in cooperation with new types of actors e.g. asset-holding institutions.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- Cities should be empowered by national governments to have more control over how and by whom services are provided.
- Frameworks need to be created for cities to learn and consolidate from experiments with service integration.⁴³

4.4.5 Users' involvement and personalisation

Principle 5

as set out by the EC: Users' involvement and personalised approaches to meet the multiple needs of people as individuals

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

Service users are involved and their views considered in the design/programming, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of public/social and supported housing services. This includes (traditional) cooperation with organised interest groups (tenants' organisations) and user satisfaction surveys (tenants' surveys). Services are provided in a personalised way to taking into account the specific situation of individual users and their views, also with the aim of empowering them. This might include e.g. choice of flat location, individual plans/personal budgets with choice of provider in supported housing services etc.

⁴³ See also principle 7 on monitoring and evaluation

Main trends

Trend to more user involvement

There is a trend across Europe towards more user involvement and personalisation in housing services. Countries with a tradition of democracy and citizens' participation (SE, NL, UK) generally have well-established tools for user participation, in others, this has been introduced only recently (CZ) or approaches are scattered and experimental (IT).

Strong involvement of tenants in provision of social housing

Users are involved through representation on a political (through tenants' associations) or operational level (involvement of citizens in planning processes) or - on a micro-level - through exercising their rights as tenants. Often, the political representation of tenants or residents through tenants'/residents' unions or associations are historically well-established processes and exercise quite strong power (SE, NL, UK). For instance, the Swedish Union of Tenants' activities involve the annual negotiations of rents of municipal housing tenants⁴⁴ (which also influences rents of privately owned stock), lobbying activities to strengthen the position of tenants and their security of tenure etc. (Hyresgästföreningen 2003). They also influence the housing market regulation. Similarly in the UK, tenants' and residents' associations are involved through consultation processes and needs analyses within the local community. In the Netherlands, tenants/users sit in panels that mainly decide over maintenance issues. When additional support is needed however users have a say in issues ranging from practical matters to policy issues. The City of Rotterdam is currently working on a city protocol for residents' involvement that should secure adequate involvement. A standardised support package is developed for housing corporations to implement the protocol.

Few examples of involvement in planning or managing of social housing

In some cities there is a stronger involvement of tenants through direct involvement in planning or managing public/social housing. One example in England is where, since 1994, council tenants have had the statutory right to manage their own properties. According to this right, groups of tenants are able to form tenant management organisations to collectively manage their homes. They undertake housing services such as rent and service charge collection, cleaning of communal areas and are responsible for repair and maintenance work.⁴⁵ Another example is the urban planning laboratory 'Laboratorio Mercato' in Bologna mentioned below (see Box 8). In Sweden, some cities have launched participation projects that aim to create a platform for dialogue between inhabitants and public housing companies, e.g. 'Idépunkten' in Göteborg (since 1993) and 'Järvdialogen' in Stockholm (since 2008, see Box 11 below).

⁴⁴ Rents are cost-based and renegotiated annually at a local level between the municipal housing company and the Tenants' Association. Negotiated rents create a ceiling for rents on similar housing, including for private property owners. Consequently, municipal housing companies have a regulatory function for both municipal and private housing companies. This rental model has been queried by the EU and is in the process of being changed.

⁴⁵ Currently, there are over 250 such organisations managing ca. 85,000 homes between them (House of Common 2008: 10).

Box 11: Stockholm - Involving users - 'Järvadialogen'

'Järvadialogen' is a part of 'Järvalyftet', a program for area development in Järva, a part of Stockholm with a high level of unemployment, segregation, social problems and in some cases poorly maintained apartments. 'Järvadialogen' started in 2008 as a result of popular protest directed at the drafts for restoration of the public housing in the area of Järva where the entire planning process was done without involvement from the people in the area. In 'Järvadialogen' the City of Stockholm cooperates with the two major public housing companies, Svenska Bostäder and Familjebostäder as well as with the local tenants union. The following steps have been done:

- An open house and dialogue is arranged during one week. During this time residents are invited to participate by leaving suggestions and deliberating in a number of ways. One way to stimulate participation is to allow residents to put up different colored sticker on a large air-photo of the area. Green for that which is good, red for things that are bad. Special cards are also provided where more detailed suggestions for improvements could be written down. To encourage people leaving suggestions, a free months' rent was randomly given to one of the tenants.
- Feed-back from the open house in the form of a report and an exhibition where suggestions, priorities to be taken into consideration when developing the new restoration plan for the neighborhood is developed and presented to residence during one week. The report is also presented to other stakeholders, since a number of suggestions concern other stakeholders.
- Parallel to the feed back process, suggestions of "minor" improvements are dealt with straight away.
- A new plan for restoration is being developed by architects based on the suggestions from the open house dialogue (forthcoming)

In addition to the 'open house' method, neighbourhood 'walks' have been organised. Participants are being guided through the area, in a total of six stops, and can write down what they think is good and bad as well as suggestions for improvements.

Main suggestions generated from these activities relate to security issues (due to a lot of criminality and physical spots where insecurity prevails due to lacking lighting), geographical identity of the neighborhood (the proximity to shopping centre and Stockholm city centre is evaluated positively, the same goes for the qualities of the adjacent Järva nature reserve), renovation of apartments, the need for more activities for young people.

Järvadialogen has so far succeeded in increasing participation - a total number of 4500 individuals have given their view on the future development of the area. The open house dialogues have generated vast material which is being used by architects and city planners in the process of restoration of the area. A new plan is being developed and the first will be presented during 2010. Many of those suggestions that required only minor changes have already been carried out.

Furthermore, the project has led to changes in the work with the staff at the housing association 'Svenska Bostäder'. The attitudes of employees towards involvement and dialogue with tenants has changed considerably and improved the relationship between the company and the residents.

In 2009, a similar project started in the Southern part of Stockholm: Söderortsvisionen.

User involvement is stronger in evaluation but weak in the design and planning of supported housing services

As a rule, users are involved in service evaluation with the aim to monitor outcomes and to detect gaps in service provision. Standardised surveys are conducted on a regular basis collecting data on user's satisfaction with the service. In this case, user involvement appears merely as monitoring tool.

Generally, service users have a formal right to appeal meaning the users have the right to complain if they are not satisfied with the service delivered. Mostly, users are involved through structured dialogues in the form of representative bodies or through participation in user forums. For instance, user organisations exist in Rotterdam, though they are relatively powerless. In the Netherlands, service providers are legally obliged to organise client participation. In the frame of the Strategy for Social Relief, most service providers have established client representative boards that have

different levels of influence, ranging from practical matters to policy issues. However, the extent to which users can influence the planning and design of services is generally considered to be rather low. One example is the community planning process introduced in the Czech Republic in 2003 (see Box 6, section 3.2.1). According to the community planning principles, users can participate as individuals as well as members of various associations and interest organisations. Yet, in practice, the decisions taken about the character of (social rental housing and) supported housing are to a significantly higher extent influenced by decision-makers from among the local authorities and providers of these services.

Box 12: City of Manchester: Independent Living Charter

In Manchester, the Supporting People programme has produced an Independent Living Charter launched in the city in September 2009. The Charter came about as part of the Department of Communities and Local Government, Supporting People Strategy 2007; which requires local authorities to produce a Charter showing how the Supporting People programme engages with users. In May 2008 the Manchester City Council Supporting People team held a service user forum attended by over 200 people, with the key outcome identifying 8 'need to reach' groups - including those suffering from domestic abuse; homeless/rough sleepers; those with HIV; mental health issues. Following this event the Supporting People Team contacted local providers and delivery agencies setting up focus groups. The SP team collated the data produced from these sessions and meetings and created a rough outline which was presented at a further event with both service providers and users.

The charter was formally agreed and launched on 7.9.09, at a public event attended by the Lord Mayor and the Director of Adult Social Care. The Charter will be monitored by 12 newly recruited and trained peer assessors. These assessors are volunteers who have used support services before and will now work with council officers to assess service providers against the standards in the charter.

Individualisation of services happens through case management and personal budgets

Involving users in the design of the service delivered has become a key focus through personalisation of social services taking two main approaches:

- case management

With an increased focus on the integration of services, case managers obtain a key role in customising social services to individuals and ensuring users are led to the service they need. As one example, in Rotterdam, the Strategy for Social Relief provides for the individual user to have, to a certain extent, the possibility to choose and steer the services provided to them through the individual plan they draw up together with their case manager (see Box 12 below).

- personal budgets

The idea behind personal budgets is that users should be capable of managing the budget and have the ability to make well-informed choices from services on offer. Yet, implementation of this concept occasionally appears to be difficult. In Rotterdam, there has been some experimentation with personal budgets for people with psychiatric problems, people with learning disabilities and older people or their representatives. However, in reality, many of the users turn to professionals, relatives or friends for support, thus possibly undermining the basic idea of autonomy and empowerment.

Box 13: Rotterdam/The Netherlands - Strategy Plan for Social Relief

The Dutch Strategy for Social Relief rests on two pillars. One is a personal approach in which each service user is provided with a caseworker and individual plan. The other is a coherent integrated approach in which all partners in the service delivery process work together on administrative level (municipality, health care institutions, insurance agencies) and on executive level (care workers, institution case managers, case managers from the municipal department of Social Affairs and Employment and from the municipal department for Health and Wellbeing).

In Rotterdam, the Strategy for Social Relief has introduced a central intake with the aim to provide a central screening system and registration of all the homeless in the region of Rotterdam, and therefore promote the flow from the shelters to sustainable housing environments. In the planning of the Strategy, the integrated approach allows stakeholders involved more time for cooperation, discussing individual users, their needs and their progress. Individual plans with targets on different areas of life are discussed within regular meetings of representatives of all organisations involved to ensure agreement of all stakeholders and a consolidation of the different services into the individual plans.

Challenges

- Though users' views are used on a regular basis to improve services, the empowering aspect of involving users at an early stage/in the planning of services remains scarce. Apart from a lack of consideration of users' needs, an opportunity for more user empowerment remains unusual.
- While representation of public/social housing tenants is mostly well established, organised representation is more difficult among supported housing users since, here, the target group is more 'volatile' and often in highly vulnerable situations.
- Personalisation seems to be problematic for some groups of users, namely those who don't feel fit to take their own decisions.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- Although a number of actors have entered the field of public/social housing provision, often municipalities still hold key responsibilities in planning, commissioning, allocation and provision of housing services. This enables them with the responsibility to organise meaningful user involvement.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- Funding should be provided by central levels of government to allow cities and service providers to develop new models of user involvement that allow for a greater focus on user empowerment.
- Such models should encourage user management of housing stock at small-scale community or geographical levels.
- A continued exchange on good practices is needed at national and European level.

4.4.6 Quality management

Principle 6

as set out by the EC: Monitoring and performance evaluation and sharing of best practice

EUROCITIES-NLAO elaboration:

The quality of public/social and supported housing is monitored, evaluated (e.g. through quality indicators) and best practice is shared.

Main trends

Quality management is becoming ever more important

Monitoring the quality of services has become an essential part of the delivery of social and supported housing. The availability of accurate, timely information and data on housing needs, user requirements, and policy impact is becoming even more important in times with diversifying and changing demands⁴⁶. Again, some countries are forerunners in monitoring and performance evaluation, particularly NL and UK, and some have only recently introduced provisions in the context of more general reforms such as Bologna/the Emilia-Romagna Region, or the Czech Republic.

Social housing - state regulates, municipality ensures quality

While national laws provide for technical standards for (public/social) housing, municipalities generally have a strong role in ensuring quality of social housing, e.g. Housing Customer Standard in Southampton (see Box 14), and by enforcing them. Sometimes, tenants' representatives are involved in defining quality, as e.g. in the UK where local authorities define quality together with the tenants' association.

Box 14: Bologna - Services Charter for Social Housing

The ACER (Azienda Casa Emilia-Romagna), a housing company of the Emilia Romagna Region has set up a Service Charter setting:

- principles inspiring ACER action (fairness, impartiality, continuity, participation, effectiveness and efficiency, clarity and comprehensibility of communications);
- the standards to which the company provides its services (times for providing services, simplification of procedures, means of transmitting information to Customers, relations with Customers, quality assessment of services, typology of reimbursement in case of delay, any penalties due to clients);
- mechanisms for customer protection (complaints to improve services and remedy disservices, public relations office, validity and constant revision of Services Charter and standards).

Most countries have general housing standards, rather than specific social housing standards

In most countries covered in this report, there are general (obligatory) standards applicable to the whole housing sector, rather than specific standards for public/social housing. This is the case in the Netherlands and Sweden where public/social housing constitutes a relatively high share of the total housing stock, as well as in the Czech Republic and Italy. Other countries (UK) however, have specific sector regulation settings. As one example, according to the 'Decent Homes Standard' in the UK dwellings should be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.

⁴⁶ See also comments on Principle 1 including issue of „principle of residence“

Box 15: Southampton - Housing Customer Standard

The Housing Customer Standard is a local standard (reflecting national policy) that outlines how Southampton Local Authority will -

- Consult and involve residents in improving tenant and leaseholder services.
- Meet the Decent Home standard by 2010
- Provide an excellent repairs service.
- Make empty houses ready for the next family.
- Offer a range of ways to pay rent and provide practical help and advice to those who have difficulty paying.
- Enforce our tenancy conditions and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Work with residents to improve our estates, build new homes and make neighbourhoods better places to live.
- Support opportunities for local training and employment on our estates
- Adapt homes to help people with disabilities.
- Provide safe and secure housing for older people and services which support independent living in the community.

The Charter is available together with a telephone hotline for feedback.

Source: <http://www.southampton.gov.uk>

Quality assessment in social housing is done mainly through user surveys

The monitoring of quality in public/social housing through surveying tenants' (or owners') satisfaction is a well-established tool in the public/social housing sector. These surveys are conducted regularly to measure tenants'/residents' satisfaction with the apartment, housing provider service and other factors that may have an effect on their satisfaction.

A more systematic quality monitoring alongside specific targets is rarely carried out. Usually, there are no quantitative targets in place to which performance could be measured against. One exception is the UK, where the Local Area Agreement (LAA) includes the National Indicator Set relating to the investment in and delivery of social housing and housing-related support for vulnerable groups, i.e. (net) additional affordable homes provided and the number of affordable homes delivered (gross), relating to purely numeric measuring of supply of public/social housing. The monitoring of housing provision and quality is done through the Audit Commission - an independent body regulating control of public finances. Also, the government has set out targets with regard to the 'Decent Homes Standard'.⁴⁷

Monitoring in the other countries covered by this report, if done at all, usually takes place in regular reports only that collect data with regard to public/social housing provision. Sometimes indicators are available, but they do not function as targets, but as tools to measure interventions provided in a certain period usually relating to what has been achieved/what has been planned.

Supported housing - Quality control through accreditation systems

In general, quality control of social service delivery is exercised at the stage of selecting providers of services through accreditation systems. In the Czech Republic and the Emilia-Romagna Region (Italy) only recent reforms have introduced such systems. The compliance of the service provider with the appropriate standards is assigned by way of international quality standards such as the ISO label. Municipalities then require the label in order for the service provider to be eligible for receiving public grants.

⁴⁷ All social rental homes should fulfill the Standard by 2010 (Green Paper 'Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All' (July 2000).

National homelessness strategies establish well-developed monitoring systems

Countries, which have developed comprehensive national strategies to tackle homelessness, have set out specific goals to be reached through the strategy. Some of them such as the Netherlands and the UK set out clear and quantifiable targets and give a clear time frame by when these targets should be reached. Those countries also have an elaborated system of monitoring quality. In Rotterdam, on the local level, reports are submitted quarterly to City Council and Municipal Executive. On the national level, regular thematic working group meetings bring together experts from the four participating cities to exchange expertise and experience. In addition, an independent research institute provides reports (national monitor) that are used as input for regular political meetings (twice a year) of the four biggest cities in the Netherlands together with the national government, where progress is compared and discussed. In the UK, a very systematic approach of monitoring quality is regulated externally by the Audit Commission and supported internally by a series of goals and targets laid out in the local Area Agreements which provide indicators owned jointly, by housing, health and social care commissioners at a local level. The indicators directly relate to the investment in and delivery of social housing and housing-related support for vulnerable groups. For other quality control tools see exemplarily Stockholm, Box 16 below.

Box 16: Sweden/Stockholm - Tools for quality control

Ombudsmen

The City of Stockholm has three ombudsmen: one for disability, one for the elderly and one discrimination steward. The ombudsmen are not politicians and they do not make decisions, but they can assist with advice and information. They also monitor what is happening within their business areas at national, regional and local level. The disability ombudsman should act as reinforcement and a complement to the city's responsible organisations and boards on issues relating to living conditions and opportunities for involvement for disabled people.

Quality Awards

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) annually gives an award to Sweden's quality municipality. A team of experts at SALAR reviews applications from the municipalities. Stockholm has been nominated for 2009, alongside four other municipalities of a total of 16 that applied. In the end of November SALAR announced that Stockholm received the award. Part of the city's quality work has involved becoming an IT capital. This involves streamlining businesses with the aid of IT, but mainly it involves improving service for its citizens using IT as a tool. To make it easier for users and their relatives to make choices, for example, they can look at the city's website for the "compare service" service where user surveys and Customer Satisfaction Indices are reported.

Quality guarantees

All supported housing services in the city have quality guarantees so that users know what service and care they can expect from the unit. Descriptions are also given of how shortcomings can be set right if the unit fails to live up to expectations. Part of the purpose of the quality guarantees of the City of Stockholm is to describe the tasks and undertakings of each unit. On the basis of these guarantees, users can then decide how the unit works and get involved in improving it. Finding out the views of users is an important element in quality guarantees. Quality guarantees can also help to bring about a better working environment, with greater staff involvement. If they work in a structured manner towards specific undertakings, they can view their work in a wider context and thus take part in operations and actively develop them. Around a quarter of the 290 municipalities in Sweden have introduced quality guarantees. Sweden's municipalities and county councils have supported this development.

Challenges

- People with low income often live in dwelling that are inadequately insulated and/or have inefficient and expensive heating systems resulting in tenants having to pay more for energy due to energy losses.
- Though mostly legislation regarding housing quality is in place, the challenge of ensuring quality remains.

Recommendations

Shaping city policies to address this issue:

- Diversified needs require diversified responses. Cities need to put in place assessment tools and processes that allow them to understand needs, monitor trends, evaluate policy impact and allow them to respond flexibly to new challenges.
- Evaluation tools should enable comparisons between different providers.
- Further development of environmental quality standards is crucial to tackle fuel poverty.

Support needed for cities from national & European level:

- The five EUROCITIES-NLAO cities consider that it would be helpful if there were common quality indicators at national and European level for public/social housing and for supported housing, to help benchmark results and exchange on good practices.
- Evaluation models need to be developed that
 - assess impact of housing policies on addressing exclusion and increasing access to labour market
 - allow to develop more sophisticated (allocation) policies based on individual needs assessment rather than income-based criteria
 - monitor effectiveness and quality standards of innovative policy approaches (e.g. IT - to assess capacities of integrated helpdesks to respond to needs adequately and timely and that give rapid information on new demands developing in order to adjust services)
- On a European level, opportunities for exchange of good practise in monitoring and performance evaluation should be increased, particularly on the development of indicators.

5. Conclusions

Despite different welfare state traditions, trends in social service provision are similar in the countries and cities studied. Therefore, with regard to the welfare state regime typology presented (in section 3), a first conclusion of the EUROCITIES-NLAO research⁴⁸ therefore is that these ‘simple’ types are far more complex in practice and the local municipal approaches often seek to moderate the differences in political approach at a national level. The outcome is that, in practice, there is far more in common with regard to the outcomes for services at a local level than might be assumed from ‘categorising’ political and welfare cultures in this way.

The general trends in social service provision across the countries studied outlined in Chapter 3 are mirrored in the provision of public/social and supported housing.

Across the cities/countries studied, *decentralisation* aims to improve performance of services by organising and delivering social services ‘closer to the citizen’, as districts, municipalities or regions have more knowledge of the citizens’ needs and local context. As for housing services, drawing on knowledge of the local context, municipalities deliver local needs assessments as a basis for planning of policies related to housing. They are involved in designing a framework for the criteria used in allocating housing and in setting quota for allocation to specific target groups.

At the same time, municipalities are challenged with ensuring that the needs of users are met through an appropriate range of services. In the field of housing, the trend to increase the diversity of services comes about through the widening of the range of housing providers, but also by offering users more choice in the provision of supported housing through new ways of commissioning services as shown in this report. This ‘*welfare mix*’ where governments increasingly operate with private and non-profit organisations, also poses challenges to the municipality that has changed from being provider to outsourcing body having to guarantee a certain quality level in service provision. Devolving power to sub-national levels involving greater fiscal autonomy for municipalities/regions has increased the demand for greater control of expenditure. Therefore, municipalities or regions are challenged to develop appropriate tools to monitor and assess performance of service delivery, which can help them legitimise their spending.

The *increased interest in the quality of services*, again, puts municipalities in a prominent position. In the field of housing, municipalities monitor outcomes and quality of services, both, by themselves or by regulating quality measurement in contracts with private providers. And cities have developed a number of approaches to ensure the quality of housing services such as accreditation systems, monitoring systems, indicators or other tools such as ‘quality guarantees’ or ‘quality awards’ etc.

Obviously, municipalities have better knowledge of the range of local service providers than regional or national governments, allowing for more *coordination and integration of services*. Decentralisation further increases cities’ power in this respect. This is illustrated by the establishment of one-stop shop types of services in most countries studied in this report offering users a facilitated access to services. At the same time, they allow the municipality to better monitor local needs as well as to deliver services in a more efficient manner.

⁴⁸ This conclusion resulted from workshop discussions of the EUROCITIES-NLAO city partners and EUROCITIES Brussels office.

Involving the community in the organisation and/or monitoring of service performance (*user involvement*) as a way to enhance accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of social services is also increasing. At the same time, through their proximity to users, cities are in a key position to understand users' needs attributing them with the responsibility to enable meaningful user involvement. In the field of public/social and supported housing, cities have developed a number of approaches to further enhance the dialogue with users ranging from dialogues in the planning phase to user surveys in the evaluation stage of services.

These developments put municipalities at the forefront of what is highlighted as 'access to quality services' in the Active Inclusion strategy. Based on the conclusion that local actors share more commonalities than differences, common principles at a European scale become even more important for cities.

The "Common Principles" underpinning the Active Inclusion strategy are not new, rather they refer to already existing trends that have been developing across Europe. Accordingly, as shown in Chapter 4, in most cities and countries studied in this report the quality principles with regard to housing services studied are already implemented to a considerable extent (Netherlands, Sweden, UK). In other cities and countries respectively, recent social service reforms have brought about significant developments towards an implementation of the principles such as the establishment of a social service sector (Czech Republic), increased focus on quality, more focus on user involvement and new or reinforced coordination (Italy and Czech Republic).

Yet the assessment of local experiences against the Active Inclusion strategy and the "Common Principles" has shed light on a number of issues: the lack of social housing, the exclusion of social groups in the access to public/social housing, social segregation etc. remain key challenges for cities. These are issues being perceived as important issues to be tackled and already range high on cities' agendas (see section 4.2).

Given the similarities at local level regarding both the challenges cities are facing as well as their responses to these challenges, gaps in the implementation of the principles are also similar across countries. Therefore, exchange across European cities is a crucial element to further the implementation of the Active Inclusion principles.

On a broader scale, the comparison of EU Active Inclusion policy with local experience draws the attention to some important issues:

- In the strategy as set out by the EU some social groups are excluded from the Active Inclusion strategy. This refers to undocumented migrants, the 'working poor' and young people who are neither in employment, education nor training. These groups have been clearly identified by EURO CITIES-NL AO city partners as 'excluded from the labour market'.
- It has become clear that the understanding of each principle needs to be tailored to the different service sectors addressed by the Active Inclusion strategy, and that it is important for the EC to work with stakeholders on the definition of these principles.⁴⁹
- From the perspective of European cities, the principles should reflect more explicitly the crucial role of the local level in the successful governance of social services, particularly

⁴⁹ For example, the term 'human capital' in the third principle created some confusion. For the 5th principle, the wording should address more explicitly the overall objective of user empowerment that lies behind the ideas of involvement and personalisation.

with regard to local government mediating national policies to ensure effective delivery at a local level. Drawing on the unique capacity of local government to develop and implement policies that service both people and place is a precondition in bringing about the implementation of the six principles on access to quality services, which have strong interlinkages and need to be driven by actors (such as cities) that have the capacity for integration. This would facilitate issues that are crucial to reach the objectives of the Active Inclusion Strategy, e.g.:

- the link between the integration of services for individual users with the decentralisation of level of service provision to districts;
- the coordination of social services with services and strategic planning in other policy areas (e.g. local economic development; education policies; labour market policies; land-use planning);
- the integration of Active Inclusion objectives in area-based community development schemes that combine investments in the physical environment with soft measures targeting both the community as well as individual users;⁵⁰
- further promotion of development and governance at local level of community development schemes with Active Inclusion objectives.⁵¹

This report brings local experiences to inform national and European level development. Not only have the project's National Reports and cross-European discussions been beneficial in exchanging on local experiences, the experience of the LAOs linking up with national stakeholders⁵² have brought about debates both locally and nationally shedding light on the concept of 'Active Inclusion'. Overall, this has demonstrated that cities are in an excellent position to identify what works and what does not and to function as agents in the cross-level and cross-sectoral communication between governments and other stakeholders on these issues. Therefore, cities should continue to play a key role in further monitoring the implementation of the Active Inclusion common principles.

⁵⁰ For example, building on experiences in community development schemes with the involvement of citizens in resource allocation through participatory budgeting which could be used to promote the principle of user involvement and personalization; promoting solidarity with users of supported housing services through community development projects.

⁵¹ In the UK (where local policies are drawn up within a centralised framework) it became clear that nationally managed schemes in the field of community development are not successful in generating sustainable improvements in very local neighbourhoods and communities.

⁵² Each National Report has been discussed with stakeholders in National Seminars.

Glossary

Personalisation

Personalisation means the process of adapting services personalised to the specific needs of individual users, e.g. personalised budget enabling the user a choice between service providers.

Social housing

The term ‘social housing’ refers to the physical provision of housing to disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups.

Social services

The term ‘social services’ used in this report refers to services provided directly to the person such as social assistance services, employment and training services, social housing, child care or long-term care services. It does not stretch out to financial allowances.

Supported housing

Supported housing is a combination of housing and services aimed at supporting people to live an independent life. The term encompasses services such as homelessness shelters, shelters for women exposed to violence, (non-medical) home help for disabled people.

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