**Designing and implementing effective human rights-based housing strategies: Republic of Slovenia**

Response to the request for contribution regarding *“housing strategies with at least some of the characteristics of a human-rights based approach”* is primarily based on the **Resolution on the Slovenian National Housing Programme for the period 2015–2025**.

1. **Introduction**

The Slovenian National Housing Programme[[1]](#footnote-1) establishes (*see: Annex 1*) an active housing policy through which the state will contribute to the achievement of targets defined in its development, spatial planning and social development programmes. I**n drafting the new programme, public interest has been the guiding principle** for establishing conditions that will offer a vast share of the population equal opportunities for addressing their housing needs. The new Programme is a document that provides a response to the actual housing situation. In this document the state establishes conditions for implementing all citizens’ constitutional right of choice in addressing their housing needs, and defines the general targets of the housing policy. At the same time this is an **operative document** (see: Annex 2 – Action plan)aimed at enhancing the options for the solution of citizens' housing needs. **It focuses in particular on providing quality life for vulnerable population groups by taking into consideration their specific needs.** The new Programme devotes particular attention to creating conditions for providing quality of life for various target populations groups. Interlinked measures in various priority areas, in the form of project packages, will address the housing needs of two specific target population groups: the young and the elderly.

**Fig 1: National Housing Programme: projects by priority areas in the period 2015-2025:**

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| P  R  O  J  E  C  T  S | Activation of the existing housing stock | **Better accessibility of housing** | Renovation of the housing stock | Building of new housing in areas where there is the greatest need |
| Increased security of tenancies | **New tenancy policy** | Energy renovation of residential buildings | Building of public rental dwellings |
| Public service for managing rental housing stock | **Scheme for young people** | Functional renovation of one-dwelling buildings | Active land policy |
|  | **Adequate housing for the elderly** | Integrated renovation of residential neighbourhoods |  |
| **Scheme for providing special purpose dwelling units** |  |
| Implementing bodies and supporting activities | | | |
| HOUSING FUND OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA | LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES | NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS | NETWORKS FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION |

1. **Monitoring the effectiveness of National Housing Programme (goals and timelines)**

The implementation of the Slovenian National Housing Programme is monitored by a series of determined indicators linked to the implementation of measures and actions, and the achievement of the main targets. Reports on the implementation of activities defined in the Action plan (see: annex 2) for the implementation of projects for 2015–2025 will be prepared on an annual basis. The long-term achievement of set targets of the National Housing Programme will also be reviewed. The effectiveness of the National Housing Programme will be assessed at mid-term and at the conclusion of the programme; the results will be used to make corrections to the current programme and to draft the programme for the next programming period.

1. **Activities in Slovenian National Housing Programme aimed to provide better access to housing for vulnerable population groups**

The right to housing is one of the fundamental human rights, while homelessness and poor access to housing for socially disadvantaged population groups is an extremely severe form of social exclusion; for this reason the Government devote special attention to the addressing of the housing need of these population groups. Necessary measures to ensure better access to housing for vulnerable population groups:

- gradual introduction of the new rental policy will simplify maintenance of rental housing, encourage investors to invest in new housing stock, and will, at the same time, provide financial assistance for payment of rents for the economically weaker population[[2]](#footnote-2).

- each public rental dwelling sold will have to be replaced by at least one public rental dwelling.

- the range of possible options for addressing one's housing need will be improved and extended, in particular for the young, for the elderly and for persons with special needs.

- the housing stock earmarked for addressing housing needs of the most vulnerable population groups will be increased in accordance with the demand and will be adapted so as to require minimum charges from the user.

Addressing housing needs of the vulnerable population groups is a complex and interlinked area, which covers, besides the financial and physical accessibility of housing, specific social care programmes and solutions that are adapted to particular vulnerable groups. Issues linked to the accessibility of housing for vulnerable population groups concern not only setting non-profit rents, providing subsidies for rents, shortage of public rental dwellings, and appropriate dwellings for persons with specific needs, but also the lack of different forms of assistance for people to address their housing needs by themselves. The emphasis will be placed, besides on the gradual regulation of the system of rents, on the conservation of the public rental housing stock, and this by introducing the principle that each public rental dwelling sold must be replaced by at least one (comparable) new public rental dwelling. Along with the system of incentives to increase the housing supply a system of social residence benefits must be established for socially disadvantages groups. Parallel to the introduction of cost rent for public rental housing a residence allowance must be introduced, which will increase the capacity of the economically weaker population to address their housing needs. As residential allowance is a financial transfer it is paramount that it is included in the established and operational national social relief system, that a mechanism of regular control of beneficiaries of residence allowance is put in place, that any abuse is prevented, and that interconnectivity of records is assured.

**Fig. 2 Scheme for providing special purpose dwelling units**

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| *Actions* | *Institution responsible* | *Time limit* | *Description of action* |
| *scheme for providing special purpose housing units* | HOUSING FUND OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  *(local municipalities)* | *2016 - preparation of the scheme*  *2017 - start of implementing the scheme* | * *to include the needs expressed by the line ministries* * *to include the needs of local municipalities* * *to define the scheme implementation programme* * *to define the scheme budget - including financial resources* * *to implement the scheme* |
| *scheme of providing housing units for evicted individuals and families* | MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES  MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING  HOUSING FUND OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA | *2015* | * *to launch a pilot project that is to be the basis for the preparation of comprehensive solutions* |

Co-financing for housing units (see Fig. 2) will be provided by the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia. In cooperation with local municipalities and line ministries the Fund will prepare a scheme to supply housing units for the period of the implementation of the National Housing Programme. In this way the access to special purpose units will be broadened, and will not be linked to the requirement of permanent residence within local municipality. On the basis of the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014 and 2020 co-financing of dwellings for persons with special needs will be provided by the ministry responsible for social affairs.

Providing housing units is the competence of municipalities, as it addresses cases of the worst social distress; therefore local municipalities will participate by providing building land with infrastructure in place or adequate residential areas in need of renovation.

Living units are intended as temporary accommodation for vulnerable and the most-at-risk population groups, that is persons who lose their place to stay and are at risk of becoming homeless, and persons who live in unbearable conditions (such as female victims of violence or individuals homeless after an eviction or natural disaster). Living units are by no means a long-term solution to homelessness and are intended for short-term use. These housing units ensure quality living and, at the same time, a minimum financial burden for their users.

In the coming period special attention will be devoted to providing assistance and support to persons that had been forcibly evicted. In the period 2015-2017 the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities, the Ministry of the environment and spatial planning and the Housing fund of the republic of Slovenia carried out a special pilot project, which served as basis for the preparation of integrated and systematic solutions to address the housing needs of evicted individuals and families.

**Fig. 3 Housing for people with special needs**

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| *Actions* | *Institution responsible* | *Time limit* | *Description of action* |
| *dwellings for people with special needs* | MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES  *(local municipalities)* | *2020* | * *to analyse the needs* * *to acquire and manage dwellings* * *the funds will be provided by the Operative Programme for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020 (envisaged budget of EUR 21,000,000)* |

The state and the local municipalities ensure access to adequate housing, adapted to the needs of their users, namely persons with special needs (see Fig. 3). In this context it is necessary to consider the need for including these people in society, and for providing the services they particularly require. Housing for those with special needs must be provided in adequate locations on the basis of analyses of their needs as prepared by the ministry responsible for social affairs in cooperation with local municipalities. The Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities will participate with funds from the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014–2020 in supplying adequate housing units. Local municipalities will participate mostly by rapidly and effectively providing land with infrastructure in place. The design of housing for persons with special needs must take into consideration specific architectural and functional requirements. Suitable types of housing are those that ensure an adequate level of providing care, enable maximum autonomy of living, and require the lowest housing costs.

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**Annex 1: Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015–2025**

**Annex 2: Action plan for the implementation of projects under the National Housing Programme 2015-2025**

1. The main goal of Slovenian National Housing Programme: “Providing residents with options and conditions to have adequate and affordable housing in different periods of their lives ensures equality of opportunities for all, increases social security, eliminates poverty and contributes to sustainable demographic renewal in a long-living society. “ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The National Housing Programme plans to regulate tenancies and establish a new tenancy policy in view of increasing the supply of rental housing from the existing housing stock. On the other hand, the Programme will provide adapted measures that will provide public rental housing in areas with better employment opportunities, where the demand for housing is the greatest. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)