

# Homelessness strategies in European Union Member States - The state of play in 2024

Shmulik Szeintuch

**18<sup>th</sup> European Research Conference**

**Budapest**

**13 September 2024**

# Background

## **Aim:**

Understand the state of play regarding European Union **national** and **regional** **homelessness strategies**

## **Context:**

European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (**EPOCH**)

## **Range:**

**All 27** European Union **Member States**

## **Time frame:**

The research took place between **November 2023 – July 2024**

# Research paper framework

➤ **Literature review**

➤ **2024 EU national & regional strategies state of play**

➤ **Questionnaire results**

➤ **A proposal for a good homelessness strategy**

# Official homelessness strategies and other policy documents were collected through four channels

✓ **This research**

✓ **An unpublished previous research endeavor by the EC**

✓ **DG-Employment**

✓ **OECD**

# Homelessness strategies in European Union Member States - The state of play in 2024

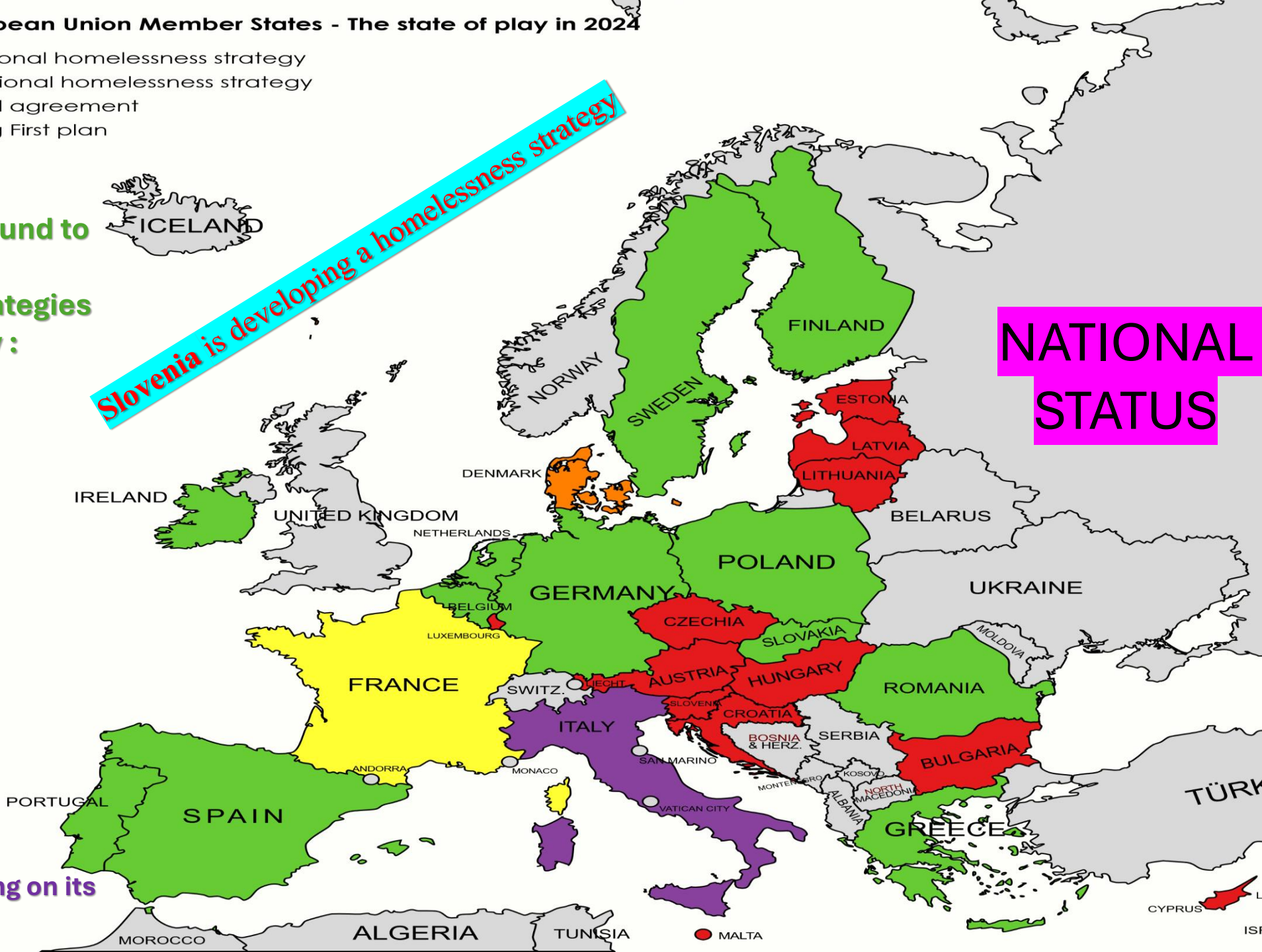
- EU Member States with a national homelessness strategy
- EU Member States with NO national homelessness strategy
- Another document - A political agreement
- Another document - A Housing First plan
- Out-of-date document

**Slovenia is developing a homelessness strategy**

**NATIONAL STATUS**

**14 EU Member States were found to have active up-to-date NATIONAL homelessness strategies or other extensive policy :**

- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Ireland
- Germany
- Greece
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Spain
- and Sweden



**Italy: an outdated strategy, working on its update**

# A zoom-in on EU MSs national homelessness strategies

Belgium	A federal poverty action plan within which there is some mention of homelessness
Denmark	An agreement between political parties inside and outside of the government regarding several initiatives to promote the construction of social housing to counteract the trend towards urban segregation, as well as a fundamental change in the efforts to combat homelessness
Finland	A decision regarding the programme to end long-term homelessness
France	A five-year Housing First plan (Phase II)
Ireland	A housing strategy within which there is a dedicated chapter regarding homelessness
Italy	An out-of-date national plan for social intervention and services, with a national plan for interventions and social services to combat poverty. Apparently the renewed 2024-2026 plan is underway
Germany	A federal level action plan to tackle homelessness
Greece	A national homelessness action plan
Netherlands	An action plan on homelessness
Poland	A social services strategy with a small chapter about homelessness
Portugal	National strategy for the integration of homeless people.
Romania	National strategy on the social inclusion of homeless people.
Slovakia	National concept and action plan for preventing and ending homelessness
Spain	National Strategy to Combat Homelessness
Sweden	Strategy to tackle homelessness

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10 REGIONS in EU Member States were found to have active up-to-date homelessness strategies:

Flanders (BE)

Cologne (DE)

North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)

Saarland (DE)

Saxony (DE)

Cantabria (ES)

Castilla-La Mancha (ES)

Catalonia (ES)

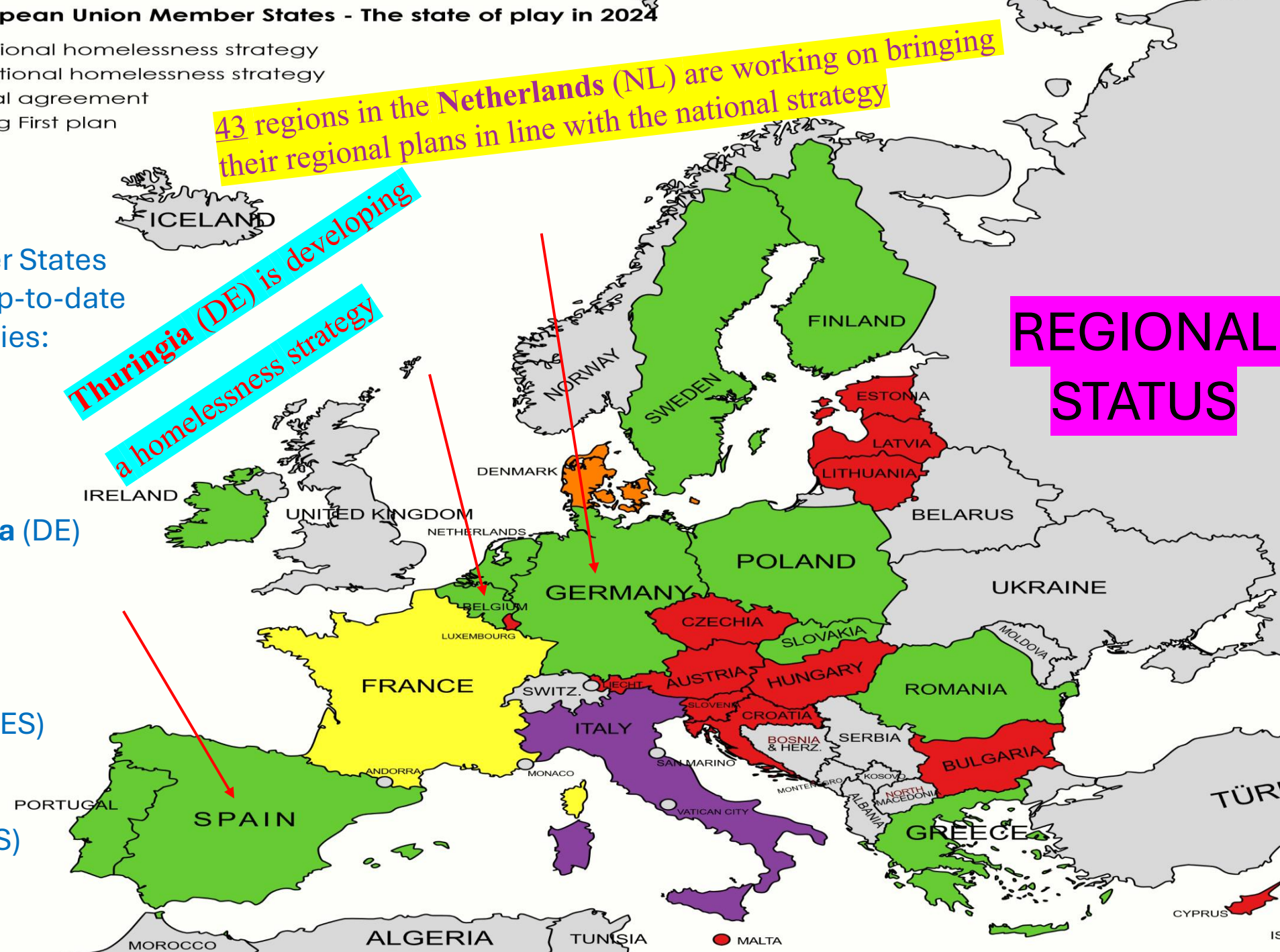
Andalusia (ES)

Basque Country (ES)

43 regions in the Netherlands (NL) are working on bringing their regional plans in line with the national strategy

Thuringia (DE) is developing a homelessness strategy

REGIONAL STATUS



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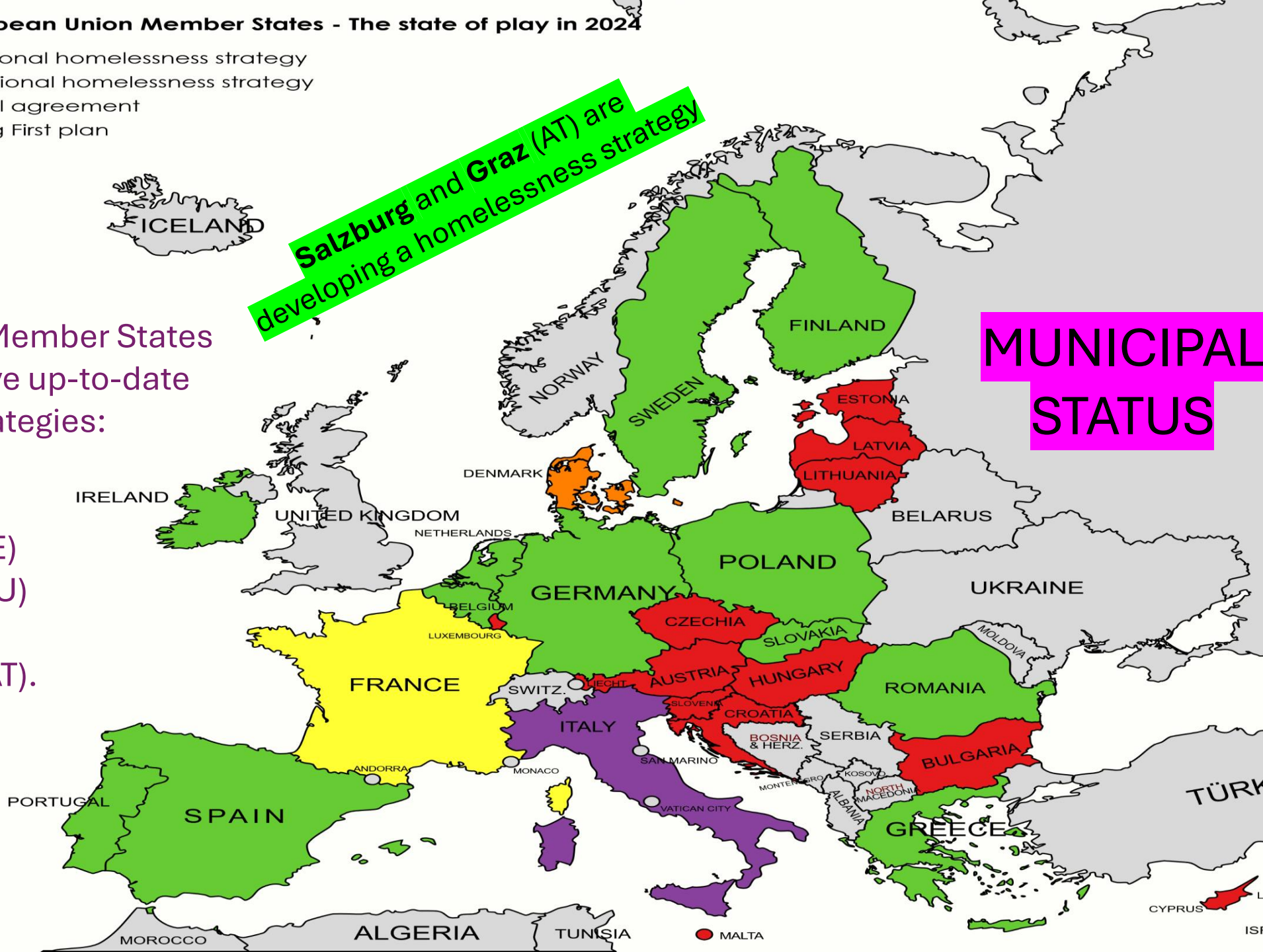
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Salzburg and Graz (AT) are developing a homelessness strategy

5 MUNICIPALITIES in EU Member States were found to have active up-to-date homelessness strategies:

Berlin (DE)  
Brussels (BE)  
Budapest (HU)  
Lisbon (PT)  
and Vienna (AT).

MUNICIPAL STATUS





# The Qualtrics questionnaire:

March and April 2024

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82 Member State delegates,  
homelessness professionals and researchers

Representing all 27 EU Member States

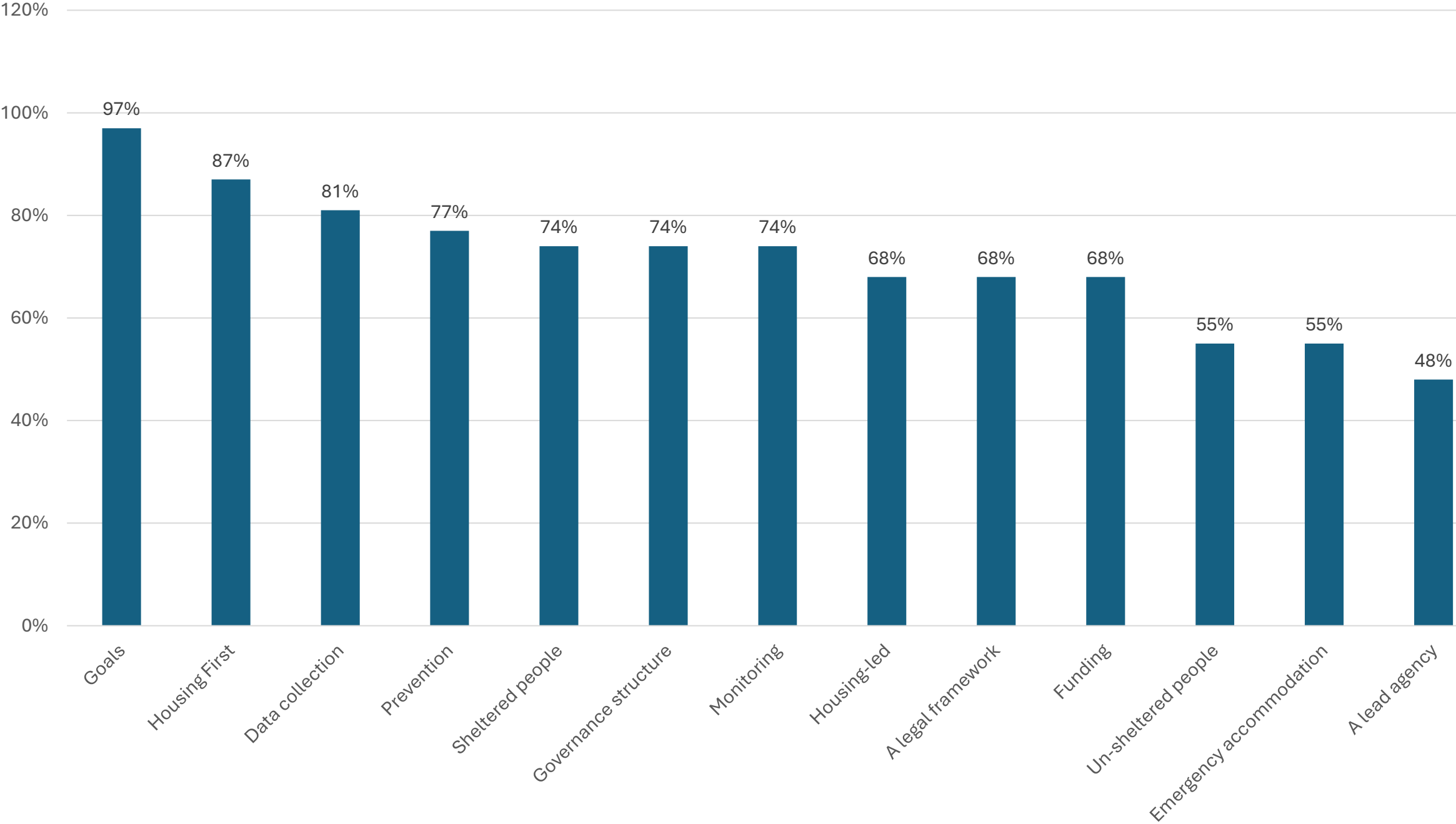


Respondents completed the questionnaire between  
18 March, 2024 to 7 May, 2024

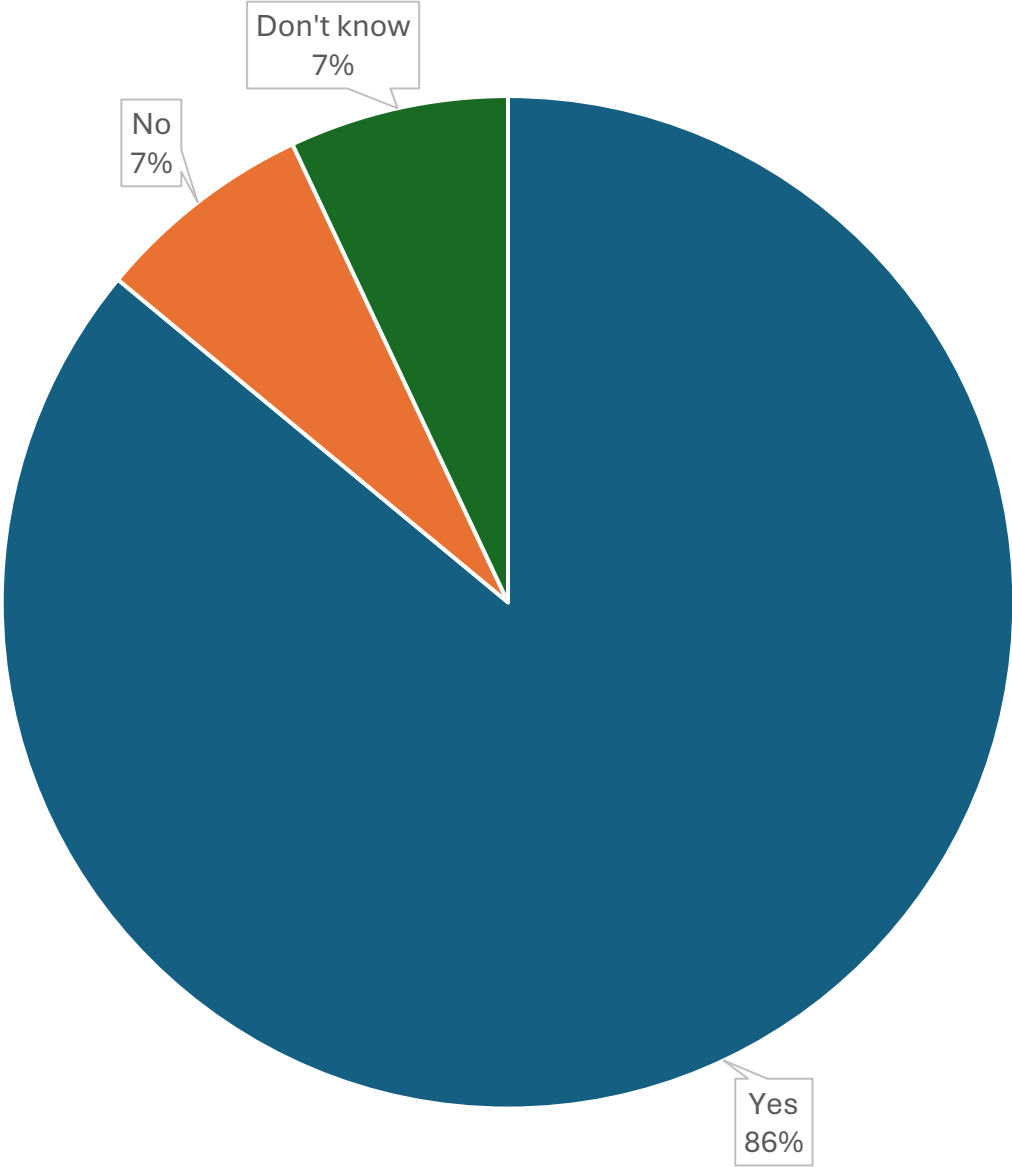
We received 46 valid responses  
from respondents representing 23 Member States



# According to respondents their homelessness strategies include the following :



**REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A STRATEGY OR NOT - In your opinion, does the implementation of a homelessness strategy contribute to resolving the issue of homelessness?**



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

# Key issues for a good and effective homelessness strategy

- **Legal framework**
- **A human rights approach to homelessness**
- **Mission, objectives, targets and goals**
- **Mission**: Provide people experiencing homelessness with decent healthy lives and wellbeing.
  - **Primary objective**: Ending homelessness.
  - **Secondary objective 1**: Delivery of long-term permanent housing.
    - **Secondary objective 2**: Prevention.
- **Target 1**: Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.
  - **Target 2**: Reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation.
    - **Goal 1**: Collection of data.
  - **Goal 2**: Building and securing enough long-term permanent housing.

.....Key issues  
for a good and  
effective  
homelessness  
strategy  
cont.....

- **Collaboration**
- **Implementation**
- **Governance**
- **Funding**
- **Data collection**
- **Prevention**
- **Temporary accommodation**
- **Permanent long-term housing**
- **An integrated approach**
- **Time frame**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**

# Some examples of open questions regarding homelessness strategies


- What is a 'homelessness strategy'?
- How can we make sure to develop a strategy that transcends governments from different political orientations?
- Does EPOCH serve as the EU homelessness strategy, or should there be more to it?
- How do we shift from emergency shelter to long-term permanent housing without reducing shelter capacity?
- How can we evaluate a homelessness strategy in a more elaborate way than just measuring the reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness?

# Are there people experiencing homelessness who are left out of the strategy?

If so - how do we bring them in?

- In 2024 EU it seems that any homelessness strategy should refer to migrants, including all the following:
  - Asylum seekers
    - Refugees
  - Internal EU migrants
  - Undocumented migrants
- People with no legal right to reside in a certain jurisdiction
  - Roma





**A few pointers  
regarding  
homelessness  
strategies**

- **Implementation is key**
- **Permanent long-term housing supply is key**
- **Consistency is important**
  - **A one-time count is not enough**
  - **A one-time strategy for a limited period is not enough**

Thank you for listening

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Shmulik Szeintuch  
[shmulik@gmx.net](mailto:shmulik@gmx.net)

