

# *Eurodiaconia Social Trends 2018*

*Report on the state of implementation of the  
European Pillar of Social Rights*

Eurodiaconia is a **dynamic**, Europe wide **community** of organisations founded in the **Christian faith** and working in the tradition of Diaconia, who are committed to a Europe of **solidarity, equality** and **justice**. As the **leading network of Diaconia in Europe**, we connect organisations, institutions and churches providing **social and health services and education** on a Christian value base in over 30 European countries.

We bring members together to **share practices, impact social policy** and **reflect on Diaconia in Europe today**.

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December 2018

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This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “EaSI” (2014-2020). For further information, please read <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. Eurodiaconia is a network of social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice.

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# Introduction

On 17 November 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) has been jointly proclaimed by all three EU Institutions, and hence also by all EU Member States, during the Social Summit in Gothenburg. The joint proclamation is a political commitment by all EU Institutions and Member States to implement the 20 principles of the EPSR and ensure that every EU citizen can enjoy his or her social rights. One year after this joint proclamation, Eurodiaconia wishes to present its members perspective on the state of implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) in 10 Member States.

Eurodiaconia is a network of 48 organizations in 32 European countries providing social services and working for social justice. Founded in the Christian tradition we work to ensure that our societies provide opportunities for all people to live in dignity and realize their full potential. Thanks to the wide range of services that our members are offering and their specific attention to quality and helping the most vulnerable, they are already contributing to the implementation of a number of principles of the EPSR. Their experience in their respective countries or regions also gives them a privileged position to evaluate the current state of social policies.

This report is based on the responses from 11 member organisations in 10 countries to a detailed questionnaire, which has been structured in two sections. The first section of the questionnaire is a ticking-box exercise that aims at gaining a basic overview of the state of play of some key principles that are of interest to our network. The second part is an in-depth questionnaire on three principles that are Eurodiaconia's focus for this year: principle 18 on long-term care, 19 on housing and assistance to the homeless and 20 on access to essential services. In addition, the answers provided by our members through the questionnaire have also been complemented by other documents provided by our members throughout the year.

The following report, therefore, is structured in two chapters. The first chapter presents an overview of the state of play of selected principles across Member States and will flag areas that need increased attention in the years to come. The second chapter will provide a more detailed analysis of the situation in Member States with regard to the three focus areas long-term care, housing and assistance to the homeless and access to essential services. Some best practice examples will also illustrate our member's practical work in those areas and how they already contribute with their daily work to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## Recommendations for a better implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights

- **Ensure that all have access to affordable and adequate quality services and support**

The individual principles of the EPSR include crucial references to the quality, affordability and adequacy of services and support structures, which should be available to all. These qualitative criteria are key for the good implementation of the EPSR and to ensure that every EU citizen can effectively access his social rights.

- Only **quality** services that are person-centred and tailor-made to individual needs can provide the support that people require and can effectively reduce inequalities, poverty or social exclusion.
- They also need to be **affordable**, so that everyone can enjoy the use of those services without excluding the most vulnerable of our societies.
- Only **adequate** wages and social benefits, including pensions, unemployment benefits, social security and minimum income, can ensure that people can live in dignity and are protected from poverty and social exclusion, while leading an active life and contributing to society. Adequacy is also crucial to realise the preventative role of social policies.
- Everyone should be able to **access** services and support measures, including migrants and any other group that faces exclusion based on identity or origin. Discrimination in the access to those rights needs to be strongly combatted.

The European Commission should ensure that the quality, affordability and adequacy of services and benefits is addressed in frameworks such as the European Semester, where relevant in legislative and non-legislative proposals, as well as in the proposals related to the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Furthermore, those qualitative elements should be addressed more prominently in the monitoring of the implementation of the EPSR, including through the social scoreboard, and common reference tools such as the Voluntary European Quality Framework on Social Services.



- **Maintain high social standards**

Many Eurodiaconia members voiced their concerns about the deterioration of social services or support measures in their countries. It is striking that these concerns have been raised particularly often by members from western and northern European countries, where traditionally strong social welfare systems have been established for a longer time.

The EPSR aims at creating upward social convergence, and not downward social convergence. Therefore, the European Commission, through the European Semester process, needs to be attentive to the evolution of social services and social protection schemes in all Member States and mainstream the role of the EPSR as a lever against arising gaps and towards upward social convergence.

- **It is all about the money**

While we recognize the need of ensuring the financial sustainability of social and healthcare services, as well as social protection schemes, this should neither be done to the detriment of the quality and affordability of those services, nor to the adequacy of social benefits.

Member States, as well as the European Union, need to ensure that enough funding remains available for the social welfare systems in order to provide quality and affordable services to all. Such a call upon increased social investment should be underpinned by an enabling economic governance framework that does not penalise such investments and acknowledges their essential role to ensure the cohesion and wellbeing of our societies. This also means that in certain areas, such as long-term care, increased funding will be necessary, as demographic change is increasing the number of persons in need of care. This should be considered as an investment in current and future generations and not as a cost.

# I. General overview of the implementation of selected principles

The 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights cover most aspects of social policies in one way or another. It is therefore not a surprise, that Eurodiaconia member organisations, as social service providers and organisations who are concerned about the most vulnerable members of our society, have a genuine interest and experience in relation to a large number of those principles. In this first chapter of our report, we aim to provide a general overview of the situation in 10 Member States who participated in our survey on 12 selected principles of the EPSR. Those 12 principles have been selected according to the experience of Eurodiaconia members as providers of social services.

As a network we strongly welcome that the definition of the single principles of the EPSR generally include qualitative criteria, such as quality, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of the different policies and services to which EU citizens should have a right to. For example, everyone has the right not only to education, but to “**quality** and **inclusive** education”, as well as to “**adequate** minimum income” and “**affordable** long-term care”. This goes an important step further than most existing frameworks and provides a basis for high social standards, if implemented correctly. For our members those qualitative criteria are essential, as the concern around quality, adequacy, accessibility and affordability are key to their everyday work as social service providers.

Regretfully, the social scoreboard<sup>1</sup> which has been created by the European Commission to monitor the implementation of the EPSR across the EU, is not measuring those criteria and therefore misses out on an important part of the EPSR. Furthermore, Eurodiaconia deeply regrets that the social scoreboard is not covering all principles of the EPSR equally and is covering very little of the third Chapter on social inclusion. With this report Eurodiaconia hopes to contribute to closing those gaps by including most principles of the third Chapter in the survey and by deliberately focussing the questions for its members on the qualitative criteria of social policies or services in their country.

Members were asked to evaluate the current situation, but also the evolution they see: whether the situation is improving, staying the same or deteriorating. Members had the possibility to qualify a situation as very good (1), good (2), ok (3) or bad (4) and to say whether the situation was improving ↗, not changing =, or deteriorating ↘. As this is the first year Eurodiaconia is doing this survey, there is no possibility to make comparisons over time. However, it is planned to have such a survey every year and to be able to observe evolutions and trends concerning the implementation of the different principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

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1 <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/>

## Principle 1: Education, training and life-long learning

*“Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.”*

Concerning education, our members were asked to give their impression on the following specific aspects of the principles: Quality of child education, quality of vocational training, inclusion of migrants in education and vocational training, inclusion of Roma in education and vocational training and support given to disadvantaged young people during their education path and to enter the labour market.

The outcome of the survey regarding education is very mixed. While the quality of education and vocational training is evaluated “ok” by most member organisations, the inclusion of migrants and Roma, as well as the support to disadvantaged young people scores less well. However, it is noteworthy to see that several respondents feel that the quality of education is deteriorating in their country (DK, HU, IT, LV). On the other hand, some members feel that the inclusion of migrants in education is improving (DK, IT, LV, NL).

- It becomes clear, that efforts are needed in most countries represented in this survey, to maintain good levels of education and improve further the inclusion of migrants and Roma in education and vocational training. Furthermore, measures should be taken to improve or maintain good levels of support to disadvantaged young people.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Quality of education	3 =	2 ↘	3 =	4 ↗	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 =
Quality of vocational training	3 =	2 ↘	2 =	4 ↗	3 ↗	3 =	3 ↗	3 =	4 ↗	3 =
Incl. of migrants in education	4 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	
Incl. of migrants in vocational training	4 ↘		3 ↘	4 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	
Incl. of Roma in education			4 ↗	4 =	4 =	3 ↘	4 =		3 =	4 ↗
Support to disadvantaged young people	4 ↗	2 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↗	4 =	3 =	3 ↗	4 =	3 ↗	4 ↗

## Principle 3: Equal opportunities

*Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public. Equal opportunities of under-represented groups shall be fostered.”*

In the field of equal opportunities, Eurodiaconia member organisations were asked to evaluate the situation of two specific groups, migrants and Roma, on the labour market, in accessing social services, in accessing social security and healthcare and in accessing adequate housing.

The results show strikingly that equal opportunities are not a reality neither for migrants nor for Roma



across the Member States that have been surveyed. Only our members in Denmark, Finland and Latvia give some slightly more positive evaluations concerning equal opportunities for migrants and a similar situation can be observed in Romania and Slovakia concerning equal opportunities of Roma.

As regards equal opportunities for migrants, it is alarming, that some members observe deterioration to situations which are already evaluated as being bad. This is in particular the case in Austria and the Netherlands, but to a certain extent also in Italy and France, as well as in Finland.

As regards equal opportunities for Roma, our members mostly feel that there is no change, except for Denmark, Romania and a certain extent also Slovakia, where members do see some improvements.

- Equal opportunities, in particular for migrants and Roma need to be recognised as a key issue for social justice across the EU. More needs to be done at all political and societal levels to counter discrimination to enable everyone to fully participate in society.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Migrants on the labour market	4 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	
Migrants accessing social services	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 =	3 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	
Migrants accessing social security and healthcare	4 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↘	4 =	4 ↘	3 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	
Migrants accessing adequate housing	4 ↘	3 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 =	3 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	
Roma on the labour market			4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 =	4 =		4 ↗	4 ↗
Roma accessing social services			4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 =	4 =		3 ↗	3 =
Roma accessing social security and healthcare			4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 =		3 ↗	3 =
Roma accessing adequate housing			4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 =		3 ↗	4 ↗

## Principle 4: Active support to employment

*“Everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. Everyone has the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions.*

*Young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.*

*People unemployed have the right to personalised, continuous and consistent support. The long-term unemployed have the right to an in-depth individual assessment at the latest at 18 months of unemployment.”*

On Active support to employment, member organisations were asked whether they consider that support is provided in a timely and personalised manner, whether long-term unemployed persons receive an in-depth individual assessment and if support includes possibilities of training or gaining new qualifications.

As regards active support to employment, clearly two groups of countries emerge. Those evaluated as “ok” (AT, DK, FI, LV, SK) and those evaluated as “bad” (FR, HU, IT, NL, RO). It should be noted however, that within the better group, our members feel that the situation in Denmark and Finland is deteriorating and therefore risk joining the other group in the future. On the other end, our members in Romania are feeling that the support to employment is currently improving.

- ▶ The support to the unemployed should be further strengthened and improved, especially as regards the support to long-term unemployed through in-depth individual assessments. Furthermore, it needs to be ensured that levels of support are not decreasing in countries that have been stronger traditionally in this area.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Support is timely	3 ↘	3 ↗	3 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	3 =	4 =	4 ↗	3 =
Support is personalised	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 =	3 =	4 =	4 ↗	3 =
In-depth individual assessment	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	3 =
Training or requalification	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	3 =	3 =	4 ↗	3 =	3 =



## Principle 6: Wages

*Workers have the right to fair wages that provide for a decent standard of living.*

*Adequate minimum wages shall be ensured, in a way that provide for the satisfaction of the needs of the worker and his / her family in the light of national economic and social conditions, whilst safeguarding access to employment and incentives to seek work. In-work poverty shall be prevented.*

*All wages shall be set in a transparent and predictable way according to national practices and respecting the autonomy of the social partners.*

Concerning wages, it was asked whether wages provide for a decent standard of living and if minimum wages are adequate and prevent in-work poverty.

Most respondents report that in their country wages do not allow a decent living standard (FR, IT, LV, NL, RO, SK) and minimum wages are not preventing in-work poverty (FR, HU, IT, LV, NL, RO, SK). Denmark sticks out of this trend, but only to a certain extent, as our members evaluate the situation as good, but also deteriorating. Finally, it should be noted that in four countries our members consider that the adequacy and capacity of preventing poverty of minimum wages is decreasing (DK, FI, FR, HU), while only two members believe that it is improving (LV, SK).

- Solutions need to be found to increase wages in such a way that a workers can be sure to have a decent living standard. Minimum wages can be one tool towards insuring this, if they are adequate.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Wages allow a decent living standard	3 =	2 ↘	3 =	4 =	3 ↗	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 ↗
Minimum wages are adequate and prevent in-work poverty	3 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↘	4 ↘	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	4 ↗

## Principle 11: Childcare and support to children

*Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.*

*Children have the right to protection from poverty. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities.*

As regards childcare and the support to children, members were asked to evaluate the affordability and quality of early childhood education, as well as the support to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the protection of children from poverty.

Overall, Eurodiaconia member organisations agree that early childhood education in their countries is affordable and of good quality, except for our Austrian and Latvian members, who both consider that affordability is an issue.

Protection of children from poverty seems, however, to be an issue of concern in most countries. 8 members out of 10 evaluate it as being bad and only four members observe improvements (FR, LV, NL, SK). As regards the support to disadvantaged children, several members consider that the situation is not good (AT, FR, IT, LV, RO). Most of them, however, consider that the situation is improving.

- Particular attention should be given to the protection of children from poverty and social exclusion and measures need to be taken to better support those children and avoid continuing the vicious circle of disadvantage. This includes ensuring that early childhood education is affordable for everyone.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Early childhood education is affordable	4 ↗	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↗	3 =
Early childhood education is of good quality	3 ↗	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↗	3 =
Children from disadvantaged backgrounds receive support	4 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	3 ↗	4 ↗	3 =
Children are protected from poverty and social exclusion	4 =	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 =	4 ↗

## Principle 12: Social Protection

*Regardless of the type and duration of their employment relationship, workers, and, under comparable conditions, the self-employed, have the right to adequate social protection.*

Concerning social protection, member organisations were asked whether they consider that social protection protects all types of workers effectively from poverty.

While half of the members say that their country is doing badly in protecting all workers through social protection schemes (HU, IT, LV, NL, RO), the other half considers that their country is doing ok, but that protection is deteriorating (AT, DK, FI, FR).

- Social protection schemes need to be adapted and improved with the aim to effectively protect all workers from poverty. There needs to be some attention as well to traditionally strong social protection schemes to ensure that they are not deteriorating but continue to adequately supporting people.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Protection from poverty for all workers	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 =	3 =

## Principle 13: Unemployment benefits

*The unemployed have the right to adequate activation support from public employment services to (re) integrate in the labour market and adequate unemployment benefits of reasonable duration, in line with their contributions and national eligibility rules. Such benefits shall not constitute a disincentive for a quick return to employment.*

Member organisations were asked whether they consider that unemployed receive adequate unemployment benefits and activation support.

Broadly said, Eurodiaconia members are not very satisfied with the adequacy of unemployment benefits. Five members out of eight, evaluate the adequacy as ok, while the three remaining consider it being bad. Furthermore, three members even observe a deterioration of adequacy of benefits (AT, FR, NL). The situation is similar on adequate activation measures. There, three members observe a deterioration (AT, FI, NL), while two observe some improvements (FR, RO).

- Unemployment benefits and activation support should be conceived in such a way that it supports people to return to work, while protecting them from poverty.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Unemployment benefits are adequate	3 ↘		3 =	4 ↘		4 =	3 =	4 ↘	3 =	3 =
Adequate activation support	3 ↘		3 ↘	4 ↗		4 =	3 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	3 =

## Principle 14: Minimum Income

*Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.*

As regards minimum income, Eurodiaconia asked its members to evaluate whether minimum income benefits are adequate and can ensure a life in dignity.

A significant majority of members agree that minimum income benefits are not adequate and leading to a life in dignity. Out of the seven members, evaluating the situation as “bad”, two even see a deterioration (HU, NL) and two others see some improvements (RO, SK). All three members evaluating the situation as “ok”, also observe a deterioration (AT, DK, FI).

- Further efforts need to be made to ensure that minimum income benefits are adequate and ensuring a life in dignity. There also need to be some attention that the adequacy of income benefits is not decreasing in certain countries.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Minimum income benefits are adequate and can ensure a life in dignity	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	4 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗



## Principle 16: Healthcare

*Everyone has the right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality.*

On healthcare Eurodiaconia asked its members if they feel that good quality healthcare is accessible and affordable to everyone.

Most Eurodiaconia members are relatively satisfied with the healthcare supply in their countries, although only AT and FR score “good” in some of the questions. It is however striking that several members consider that the situation is deteriorating in some or even all aspects (DK, FI, FR, HU, IT, NL, RO, SK). Two members (HU, LV), even consider that the provision of healthcare is generally bad with deteriorations observed in Hungary.

- It needs to be ensured that high levels of affordable and good quality healthcare services remain accessible to everyone. In certain countries, more efforts are needed to improve the provision of healthcare services.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Accessible good quality healthcare	2 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	2 ↘	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =
Healthcare is affordable	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↗	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘
Healthcare is of good quality	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	2 ↘	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↗



## Principle 18: Long-term care

*Everyone has the right to affordable long-term care services of good quality, in particular home-care and community-based services.*

In the area of long-term care, Eurodiaconia member organisations have been asked for an evaluation of accessibility, affordability and quality of long-term care services. In addition, they have also been asked about the provision of quality homecare and quality community care services in their countries.

While most Eurodiaconia members feel that the provision of long-term care is ok, there are some countries clearly sticking out of this general image for the better and for the worst. The situation is evaluated as bad in all areas of the questionnaire concerning long-term care in the Netherlands and in Slovakia. On the other hand, the situation in Denmark is evaluated as good, although deteriorating.

Furthermore, some areas seem to be of higher concern, as affordability of services, as well as the provision of homecare and community care score lower than the other questions. It is also noticeable that generally many members feel that the provision of long-term care or aspects of it are deteriorating.

- Efforts need to be increased in some countries to improve the quality and affordability of long-term care services, as well as the development of quality homecare and community care. Generally, it needs to be ensured that levels are not deteriorating.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Everyone can access good quality long-term care services	3 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 =	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗
LTC services are affordable	4 =	2 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 ↘	3 =	4 ↗	4 ↘	3 =	4 =
LTC services are of good quality	3 =	2 ↘	3 =	3 =	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	4 =	2 =	4 ↗
Quality homecare for everyone	3 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 =	4 =	3 =	4 =
Quality community care for everyone	3 =	2 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	4 =	3 =	4 ↗

## Principle 19: Housing and assistance for the homeless

*Access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need.  
Vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction.  
Adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.*

In the area of housing and assistance to the homeless, member organisations were asked to evaluate several services. They were asked whether there is good quality social housing and housing assistance for everyone in need. Furthermore, it was asked whether vulnerable people receive appropriate assistance and if they are protected against forced evictions. Finally, members were asked if homeless people have access to adequate shelter and if they receive support for social inclusion.

The housing situation is evaluated as being bad by most respondents to the survey. Only three countries are evaluated as “ok” in most aspects (AT, DK, FI) and in two of those countries Eurodiaconia members observe deteriorations of the situation.

The protection against force eviction, is an area that is of particular concern to members, and only Finland scores “ok” as far as the general population is concerned, and all countries score “bad” when Roma are concerned.

- Housing is an issue of concern and more needs to be done to ensure that there is enough quality social housing, as well as adequate assistance to support people in need.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Good quality social housing for everyone in need	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	4 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 =
Good quality housing assistance for everyone in need	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↘	3 ↘	4 ↗
Vulnerable people receive adequate assistance	4 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↗	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗
Vulnerable people are protected against forced eviction		4 ↘	3 =	4 ↘	4 ↘	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 ↗	
Roma are protected against forced evictions			4 ↗	4 =	4 ↘	4 ↗	4 ↗		4 ↗	
Homeless people have access to adequate shelter	3 ↘	3 ↘	3 =	4 =	3 =	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	3 ↗
Homeless people receive adequate support for social inclusion	3 ↘	4 =	3 ↘	4 =	4 ↗	4 =	4 ↗	4 ↘	4 =	3 ↗





## Principle 20: Access to essential services

*Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available for those in need.*

Concerning access to essential services, Eurodiaconia member organisations were asked to evaluate if everyone in their country has access to water, sanitation and energy, if essential services are of good quality, accessible and affordable and if persons in need receive support to access essential services.

Respondents are comparably positive as regards the provision of essential services, although there are also some exceptions. Especially Eurodiaconia's French member is very concerned about the provision of essential services, which it evaluates as bad. In addition to this, several other members evaluate their essential services as ok, but deteriorating at least in some areas (DK, IT, NL, SK). The only exception is to be found in Austria, where our members evaluate the situation as good and not changing.

The support to persons in need to access essential services should be of particular concern, as it received the worst evaluations with three members evaluating the situation as "bad" (FR, IT, RO).

- It needs to be ensured that the access to essential services is not deteriorating but improving where necessary. Furthermore, support to persons in need to access essential services should be further developed.

	AT	DK	FI	FR	HU	IT	LV	NL	RO	SK
Everyone has access to water and sanitation	2 =	3 =	3 =	4 ↗		3 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 =	3 ↘
Everyone has access to energy	2 =	3 =	3 =	4 =		3 =	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 =	3 =
Essential services are of good quality	2 =	3 ↘	3 =	3 =		3 ↘	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 ↗	3 =
Essential services are accessible	2 =	3 ↘	3 =	4 =		3 =	3 ↗	3 ↘	3 ↗	3 =
Essential services are affordable	2 =	3 =	3 =	4 =		3 =	3 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 ↘
Persons in need receive support to access essential services	2 =	3 ↘	3 =	4 =		4 ↗	3 ↗	3 ↘	4 ↗	3 =



## II. In-depth analysis of focus-areas

### a. Principle 18: Long-term care

*Everyone has the right to affordable long-term care services of good quality, in particular home-care and community-based services.*

By 2050 more than a quarter of Europeans will be over 65 and the proportion of those over the age of 85 is expected to be 6%.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that the average health of the EU population has increased in recent years, as disability and chronic illness increase with age more people will need more complex social and health services. By 2030 the number of people with dementia globally is expected to double and more than triple by 2050.<sup>3</sup> There will also inevitably be more pressure on families as increasing numbers of older family members will have higher and consequently more expensive social and health care needs, and as a result the provision of informal care by family members may increase. On the other hand, the need of family members to be active in the labour market, might also increase the demand for formal care. These trends require adaptation of the types of services and activities service providers provide. The Eurodiaconia Network therefore strongly welcomes principle 18 of the EPSR on long-term care and its right to affordable and good quality long-term care services.

The survey among Eurodiaconia member organisations shows, that despite an increase in demand for services, Eurodiaconia's member organisations experience falling income and therefore increased difficulties in providing their services. Those with care needs are often seen as a burden by society, and the “challenge” of ageing in economic terms is often referred to. Eurodiaconia members are demanding a change of attitudes – away from seeing older persons as a burden and with incapacities, towards seeing their capabilities and possibilities. Therefore, they are calling for more investments in order to ensure that older people can live in dignity, free from poverty and social exclusion.

Members also stress the importance of developing integrated delivery of social and health services. Taking into account complex living situations as well as ongoing individualised needs and a stronger focus of older people on right of self-decision making, comprehensive care systems could provide solutions. Integrated care needs to ensure high quality service delivery, as well as coordinating and planning with different stakeholders is essential and must include prevention, rehabilitation and independent living.

We recognise that action needs to be taken in many member states to ensure that funding for quality long-term care (LTC) for all remains sustainable. However, any “re-balancing” of financial responsibility for LTC must be carefully considered and planned in consultation with all stakeholders (including older people and their carers) in order to address potential collateral impact on some groups of users and carers (for example women aged 50+) and to ensure that older people in need of care and their carers have access to the support they need for a dignified life. The involvement of private insurance in funding LTC must not detract from public responsibility to ensure ALL older people have access to quality care. Private funds therefore cannot be the only source of financing for LTC.

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2 Eurostat, own calculations

3 World Alzheimer Report 2013

## Austria

Eurodiaconia member Diakonie Austria reports that in Austria 80% of people in need of long-term care are helped by their relatives, about half of them are exclusively helped by their relatives. Long-term care services are available, but there is a financial self-contribution and many alternative care services, such as mobile services, short time care or alternative housing don't exist everywhere and are often only pilot projects and not yet fully established. There still exists a gap between care provided by relatives and institutional care, Diakonie Austria calls on its government to invest into closing that gap.

In 2012, the Austrian government has created a fund (Pflegefonds) in order to support the Länder to roll out and increase long-term care services across the country until 2022. Our members regret that this was not accompanied by a reform of the complex long-term care structures. While the quality of services is perceived to be good, Diakonie Austria would like to see a re-organisation of structures, the integration of health and social care and the development of a strategy for the expected shorting of staff in the care sector. This would also include giving a higher value to the education of nurses, ensure that there is an adequate number of staff and that they are adequately payed.

They stress the need to give a space in society for people in need of care and give them the opportunity to continue participating in social life, by having the care facilities integrated in the communities. Furthermore, they call for the development of a variety of services which can better respond to the variety of needs, including further investments to develop mobile services, create smaller units for residential care and in general increase the quality through smaller structures and more nurses and staff. They regret that certain types of care, such as 24-hour care are been developed, although this does not correspond to the actual needs.

Finally, Diakonie Austria calls for a right to palliative care and stay in a hospice for the end of life and the possibility of reimbursement of this care through regular health insurances. Furthermore, they ask for the roll out of hospices and centres for palliative care throughout the country, as so far, the offer is not sufficient according to them.<sup>4</sup>

## Denmark

Eurodiaconia member, Kirkens Korshaer in Denmark evaluates the provision of long-term care as being good overall. However, they observe a reduction of budgets for the elderly homes, which are mainly public. Elderly persons are encouraged to stay at home as long as possible, but there are not always sufficient services available for those persons. Furthermore, the risk of loneliness is considered being an increasing problem. Kirkens Korshaer regrets that it is the municipalities who decide when a person is eligible to enter a public long-term care centre and it is not the concerned person who can decide when it is the right time to move.

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4 More information on the work of Diakonie Austria in the field of Long-term care can be found here:  
<https://diakonie.at/presse-pr/presstexte/alter-pflege>

Kirkens Korshaer therefore calls on the Danish government to make more budget available for adequate and diverse long-term care services for an ageing population. Furthermore, the access to long-term care facilities should be facilitated.

## Finland

Eurodiaconia's Finish member, Helsinki Deaconess Institute, is worried about the decrease in residential long-term care services and a shift towards more home care services, which are relying strongly on family members. They are afraid that the reliance on family members is increasing and that people who do not enjoy this support will be increasingly lonely.

Therefore, Helsinki Deaconess Institute are calling on their government to develop more supported home-care services.

## OULU DEACONESS INSTITUTE

### "GAMIFIED" SERVICES FOR OLDER PERSONS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH DEMENTIA

#### **Aim of the project:**

Support the active participation of older persons, including those with dementia through the provision of specially designed e-games that will support physical and mental wellbeing.

#### **Partnership:**

Eurodiaconia member Oulu Deaconess Institute cooperates with the City of Oulu, Caritas Foundation Oulu, a few corporate partners as well as academic and IT partners to make this project a success.

#### **Challenges:**

Tailoring this e-service to the needs of older people and involving end-users in the development of the application is one challenge.

In addition it has been very difficult to find businesses who were willing to invest in the project.

## France

Eurodiaconia's French member organisation, Federation d'Entraide Protestante (FEP), regrets the bad long-term care offer for elderly persons in France. Throughout France, there are only 600 000 places in residential care centres and the development of further places is advancing very slowly. Furthermore, there is not enough development of alternative forms of long-term care. FEP calls for the possibility of the elderly to be able to choose which form of long-term care is suitable for them. In order for this to be possible, there needs to be sufficient offer of residential care, but also alternatives and possibilities of receiving home-care.

A particular point of concern is the access to long-term care for people in poverty or extreme poverty living in the streets. Many don't know the rights they have and towards which services they can turn to.

FEP also gives a lot of attention to the aspect of community and bringing together different generations and encouraging intergenerational exchange. This is one of the ways to give a space to the elderly and allow them to contribute to society. Finally, FEP also calls for the development of palliative care to allow a dignified end of life and offer adequate support to the concerned persons and their families.<sup>5</sup>

## Hungary

The Reformed Church in Hungary, one of Eurodiaconia's Hungarian member organisations is strongly concerned about changes made in December 2016 to the social law, which significantly affect long-term care. This legislative amendment package encouraged the phasing out of temporary care homes for elderly persons by 2023 and there are no mandatory timeframes for residential care anymore. This was set between one and four hours before per day, depending on the health condition of the person. The Reformed Church of Hungary is concerned, that this change in legislation will reduce the hours that persons can or will receive homecare support.

## Italy

Eurodiaconia member Diaconia Valdese regrets that the provision of long-term care in Italy is not very good. One of the main concerns is the availability of funding, as the regions are responsible for long-term care services and their available budgets are too low to fund adequate services. Recent reforms of the sector have not improved the situation.

## Netherlands

Kerk in Actie, Eurodiaconia's Dutch member organisation, regrets that there have been cuts on long-term care in the last years. As not enough long-term care facilities exist, most people in need of care rely on their social network such as family, friends and neighbours. However, this puts a lot of pressure on the informal care-network and the persons in need of care.

For this reason, Kerk in Actie welcomes that more jobs are created in this sector as they consider it to be urgently necessary in order to provide better long-term care.

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5 More information on the work of Federation d'Entreaide Protestante on long-term care can be found here:  
[http://www.fep.asso.fr/category/thematiques/personnes\\_agees/](http://www.fep.asso.fr/category/thematiques/personnes_agees/)

## Romania

Diakonia Romania, Eurodiaconia's Romanian member regrets the lack of quality standards, as well as control and oversight mechanisms in the area of long-term care. Many homes for elderly persons are not up to standards, with bad hygiene situations, overcrowding and therefore lack of personal space. They consider, that particularly for-profit long-term care services have often low quality of services. Diakonia Romania also raises the problem that new regulations are making it more difficult for small long-term care service providers. One of the issues they are facing is law 34 which regulates state subsidies and which states that there should be no additional funding to the state subsidies. However, the subsidies are often not sufficient to provide adequate care without additional funding. Other rules, such as obliging providers to employ a doctor full-time, creates additional difficulties. Our members are concerned that those strict rules are not serving the patients interests and that smaller providers will not be able to provide services anymore.

Therefore, Diakonia Romania asks for clearer legislation, better communication between different ministries and clear quality standards and oversight mechanisms.

## Slovakia

Evangelicka diakonia ECAV na Slovensku, Eurodiaconia's Slovakian member organisation, regrets the lack of a coordinated and integrated long-term care system that would bring together social and health care. Furthermore, they consider that Slovakia lacks unified standards of health and social care, as well as long-term care, lacks state support in the provision of long-term care and therefore the system is not able to provide adequate care to those who need it.

Nevertheless, they are positive about an upcoming law on long-term care which is currently prepared by the Ministry of Healthcare together with the Ministry for employment, social affairs and families. Evangelicka Diakonia hopes that this new law will be able to support the creation of an integrated and comprehensive long-term care system, which will include social and health care.

### b. Principle 19: Housing and assistance for the homeless

*Access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need.  
Vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction.  
Adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.*

In its “*Third Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2018*”, FEANTSA stresses the increase in homelessness in most EU member states. Although difficult to measure and to compare, FEANTSA presents data on homelessness which shows clearly that it is becoming increasingly urgent to act.<sup>6</sup>

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6 FEANTSA, Third Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2018, <https://www.feantsa.org/download/full-report-en1029873431323901915.pdf>

Eurodiaconia members who participated in the survey often mention the rising rents in the major cities, which make it increasingly difficult for low-income households to find decent accommodation and leading to increased housing insecurity. This observation is confirmed in FEANTSA's report, which observes increases in housing costs between 2010 and 2016 in most member states. FEANTSA also highlights the increase in inequalities related to housing costs in seven countries, where households spend very large portions of disposable income on housing.<sup>7</sup> Eurodiaconia members therefore call on their governments to increase investments in social or affordable housing in order to address the existing needs and avoid a continuing increase in homelessness.

Over the last years it has also been observed that the face of homelessness has been changing. Eurodiaconia members report that since a few years, EU migrants are one of the most represented groups of homeless. Furthermore, several members noticed that there are more and more women and young people who are homeless.<sup>8</sup> FEANTSA also stresses the increasing number of homeless children, which for example have reached up to one third of the homeless population in Ireland.<sup>9</sup>

## Austria

Diakonie Austria, Eurodiaconia's Austrian member organisation, reports that overall the housing situation is quite good. Especially in the cities, there is a broad range of existing social housing services. However, the situation is degrading, as access to social housing and housing support is being restricted, while at the same time rental prices on the private housing market are increasing dramatically (the rental costs have increased by 35% between 2004 and 2015, according to Statistik Austria). This makes it increasingly difficult for low-income households, households with low work intensity and third country nationals to have access to decent and affordable housing.

A recent study of the Vienna University of Economics and Business (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien) and the Austrian Anti-poverty Network (österreichische Armutskonferenz) has shown that the number of people living in precarious housing, in overcrowded apartments or moving from one friend to another in order not to live on the streets, has increased significantly across the country. Emergency shelters are turning into permanent residences for people who cannot find affordable housing.<sup>10</sup>

Third-country nationals and refugees face additional difficulties in finding affordable housing. They have limited access to social housing and on the private rental market they face discrimination, also because their social security benefits do not represent a security for landlords. According to Diakonie Austria this group is particularly vulnerable to abusive practices, renting substandard rooms for high prices. Our members also flag the fact that the question of housing is not addressed at all in the context of the Austrian legislation on integration.

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7 Idem., p.48

8 Eurodiaconia, *Effectively fighting homelessness in Europe: the role of social innovation and investment*, August 2016

9 FEANTSA, <https://www.feantsa.org/download/full-report-en1029873431323901915.pdf>

10 <http://www.armutskonferenz.at/news/news-2016/studie-der-wu-wien-zur-armutsbekaempfung-wohnen-das-brennende-thema.html>



Faced with increasing difficulties of lower-income households and vulnerable persons to access adequate housing, Diakonie Austria calls for making affordable housing a political top priority. They ask for the creation of low-threshold offers, the expansion of special housing solutions for excluded groups and stress the importance of addressing systematically the problem of housing exclusion due to racism.

## **DIAKONIE AUSTRIA**

### **HOUSING COUNSELLING FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES**

#### **Aim of the project:**

Support asylum seekers and refugees to find suitable accommodation in Vienna after leaving the collective accommodation centres.

#### **Key Activities:**

Provide counselling about the housing market, find landlords who accept renting to refugees and build bridges with mainstream society, follow-up counselling and support refugees to lead an independent life and provide legal advice when necessary.

#### **Challenges:**

Refugees face a lot of discrimination on the rental market, and landlords are worried that they will not be able to pay their rents. Even with the support of Diakonie Austria, it is difficult to find accommodation for refugees in a city like Vienna.

## **Denmark**

Kirkens Korshaer, Eurodiaconia's Danish member organisation, explains that while the housing situation in Denmark can generally be described as positive, the situation is worsening and increasing numbers of people are getting homeless. There are several explanations to this evolution. First of all, rents are increasing, but public support for renting has been lowered. This means that an increasing number of persons relying on public support, can't pay their rents anymore and become homeless. Kirkens Korshaer also regrets that the number of housing first apartments is not meeting the needs and that there are not enough services working on a preventive basis and helping vulnerable persons to keep their apartments. On the contrary, there have even been measures to reduce the number of unemployed persons in certain low-rent housing programmes, without offering suitable and affordable alternatives. Furthermore, they observe that a high number of homeless persons have mental health issues and alcohol or drug addictions. This shows that many of them face multiple difficulties and need support that goes beyond housing only.

Kirkens Korshaer therefore calls on the Danish government to increase the places in shelters to offer emergency support to those persons currently living in the streets and to invest more in affordable housing, including housing first units with appropriate social support in order to stabilise those vulnerable

persons and prevent future homelessness.

## Finland

Helsinki Deaconess Institute, one of Eurodiaconia's Finnish members stresses the limited housing offer in big cities, which is leading to increasing prices. In this context, they are calling for more low-cost apartments in order to make the cities more affordable for medium and lower-income households.

## France

Eurodiaconia's French member, Federation d'Entraide Protestante (FEP) is concerned about the drastic reductions in housing budgets, even though there is not enough social housing and supported housing (logement accompagné) available in France. In this context, the number of homeless persons, living in the streets and of persons living in substandard housing conditions is on the rise. Furthermore, FEP regrets the current approach to provide housing, without any social support in order to help the concerned persons to maintain their housing. Therefore, in addition to significantly increasing investments in social housing, they are also calling for better housing support services.

## Hungary

The Reformed Church of Hungary, one of Eurodiaconia's Hungarian members, observes that the housing crisis is deepening in Hungary. Rents have increased much faster than salaries and in addition to high rents, the main problems are the low quality of housing and situations of overcrowding. Those high rents also lead to the indebtedness of vulnerable households, which then puts them at high risks of evictions. According to our members, most government housing support measures are not targeted to the most vulnerable households and therefore fail to protect them from poverty and homelessness.

Furthermore, the Reformed Church is concerned about a new homeless law from October 2018, which creates a possibility of removing homeless people from public spaces. Another area of concern is energy poverty, as low-income households in Hungary are strongly affected by energy poverty. Therefore, our members stress the need to support vulnerable households to upgrade their houses in order to reduce energy consumption.

The Reformed Church of Hungary calls on its government to invest more in affordable housing, in order to balance the rising rental prices that emerge from the private rental market.

## Netherlands

Eurodiaconia member Kerk in Actie stresses that there is currently a housing shortage in the Netherlands, which results in pressure on the housing market, including on social housing. Therefore, they call on the Dutch government to invest more in social housing.

## Romania

Eurodiaconia's Romanian member organisation, Diakonia Romania, regrets that there are many shortcomings concerning the housing situation. There is not enough affordable housing and shelters for those in immediate need. Furthermore, homeless persons are often afraid of staying at shelters because they feel unsafe, often get robbed and even beaten up by other inhabitants. Social housing for vulnerable persons is not well equipped and bureaucracy often acts as a barrier in accessing social housing.

In addition, Diakonia Romania, stresses the housing problems which the Roma community is facing. Certain semi-nomad Roma communities don't have permanent residence and settle in improvised shelters, without being registered. HEKS/EPER (Swiss Church Aid) Romania Office, another Eurodiaconia member organisation, adds that many Roma are living in settlements with very poor housing situations and are also experiencing residential segregation and forced evictions. They explain that most of the forced evictions in Romania are justified by the authorities with the dilapidated state of the buildings. The solutions offered by the authorities, however, are not convenient for those affected by eviction because they overlook the housing needs of entire families. Most of the solutions include temporary housing arrangements in social centres involving the separation of families, which is refused by many of them.

HEKS/EPER Romania office regrets that a majority of measures to support Roma are conducted through externally-funded projects. They observe that the situation of Roma people is improving in the areas where such projects are implemented, but call for a coordinated effort, budget and legal framework at a national level to improve the housing conditions of Roma communities across the country.

Therefore, Diakonia Romania, calls on the Romanian government to increase investments in social housing and shelters, make efforts to register Roma, including those living in informal settlements and improve the quality of housing and housing services that are provided to vulnerable people.

## Slovakia

Evangelická diakonia ECAV na Slovensku, Eurodiaconia's Slovakian member organisation, explains that there is only very limited housing support in Slovakia so far and that it is mainly focused on addressing homelessness, but not on preventing it. They estimate that 10000 to 15000 persons in Slovakia are homeless. However, the evolution is rather positive. Only very recently the city of Bratislava has started to develop a project to support homeless people and provide social counselling in cooperation with NGOs and the local authorities. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2018, the allocated budget for social housing has been increased, which should allow for the increase of social housing in the next years.

In this context Diakonia Slovakia considers that the issue of access to housing needs to be addressed in a more holistic way. They are calling for more efforts in the prevention of homelessness and more human and financial capacity to provide adequate housing services.

### c. Principle 20: Access to essential services

*Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available for those in need.*

#### Austria

Diakonie Austria, Eurodiaconia's Austrian member organisation, considers that generally the access to essential services is very good. Nevertheless, certain services can be of very difficult access for the most deprived and vulnerable groups. Refugees, and third-country nationals to a certain extent, for example have problems on the housing market. Persons with disabilities face problems with public transportation of with financial services.

Therefore, Diakonie Austria considers that there are still significant improvements needed, in order to make essential services of good quality truly accessible to everyone.

#### Denmark

Also, Eurodiaconia's Danish member organisation, Kirkens Korshaer, considers that there is a very good provision of essential services throughout the country. Only in certain fields, such as the banks, the situation has declined because banks have closed their offices in many rural areas. While recognising that digitalisation had many positive effects, they also stress the fact that it risks increasing loneliness.

#### Italy

Eurodiaconia's Italian member, Diakonia Valdese, stresses that the provision of essential services was very good, especially in northern and central Italy. However, they regret that the quality has reduced in recent years, mainly due to a lack of funding.

#### Netherlands

Kerk in Actie, Eurodiaconia's Dutch member organisation, considers that while there is a good provision of essential services in the country, there is only limited support for vulnerable persons and groups to access those services. They regret the dominant approach that people have to be "self-reliant", instead of thinking about how vulnerable people can be supported to become self-reliant. Therefore, Kerk in Actie, calls for a change in attitudes and policies in the Netherlands to give more attention to the empowerment of people in accessing essential services.

## Romania

Eurodiaconia's Romanian member organisation, Diakonia Romania, highlights that many villages in Romania don't have access to several essential services, such as water, sewage systems, gas, internet and mobile signal, paved roads, basic healthcare services, including pharmacies or schools and cultural establishments. This already applies for villages that are 10 to 15km from a major city such as Cluj, and not only for very remote villages.

HEKS/EPER (Swiss Church Aid) Romania Office, another Eurodiaconia member organisation, adds the difficulty of Roma people to access essential health services. The possession of an identity card is crucial in order to have access to medical insurance and thus to medical services. In addition to this, they stress that the Roma population is also informally excluded from the public healthcare system on the basis of social prejudices, system deficiencies, ethnic and cultural discrimination. Many Roma who have medical insurance, do not benefit of medical services because they lack information about their rights, there is a lack of medical infrastructure in many villages and there is little preventive care offer.

Diakonia Romania regrets that despite the allocation of EU funds to support the improvement of the provision of essential services, there are no visible results. They regret mainly that infrastructure development is being organised in a centralized way and call for a decentralised approach to improve access to essential services.

### HEKS/EPER FOUNDATION ROMANIA

#### IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS OF ROMA AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

##### **Aim of the project:**

Improve the living conditions and social inclusion of Roma communities and other vulnerable minorities, through several interventions, including the upgrading of housing and improving access to essential services.

##### **Key Activities:**

One of the key activities of this very comprehensive project, is to improve the access to essential services such as roads, water, sewage and electricity for Roma communities.

##### **Challenges:**

One of the challenges is to convince local authorities to provide those essential services to the Roma communities.

## Conclusions

Through this report, and the survey on which it is based, Eurodiaconia aimed at gaining a better understanding of the state of play of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights one year after its proclamation. Through the participation of 11 member organisations from 10 EU Member States, it was possible to gain a valuable overview of the social situation across the EU.

Member organisations were asked to give some general appreciation of the situation in their country in relation to 12 selected principles of the EPSR. The principles included in the survey were selected according to their relevance for Eurodiaconia member organisations, who are social service providers and provide a wide range of social services with a particular attention to the most vulnerable of our societies. Thanks to their work, they have privileged insights and views on the effects of social policies on people in their countries.

It is difficult to know which changes can be expected one year after the joint proclamation of the EPSR. The results of our survey show, however, that there is room for improvement of social policies and the provision of social services everywhere in the EU. It is also striking to see how many members report deteriorations of social services and social protection schemes. This is contrary to the expectations and efforts on all levels are needed to stop this evolution.

The funding of social services and social protection schemes is one of the main common areas of concern. Several Eurodiaconia member organisations are stressing the need for better financial support of those services and regret that reduced social budgets already impact or risk reducing the quality and affordability of services that are provided.


Another common concern is the possibility of everyone to access his or her social rights as stated in the EPSR. Many Eurodiaconia members observe that equal opportunities are not yet a reality and that in particular migrants and ethnic minorities such as the Roma face discriminations when trying to access their social rights. Also, very vulnerable groups might face difficulties in accessing certain social services, because they are not adapted to support them effectively.

The Eurodiaconia Network hopes that this report can make a contribution to the monitoring of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and that it will encourage the European Commission and Member States to increase their efforts to make social services and social protection schemes fit for purpose.





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Eurodiaconia is a federation of 48 social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice.

Eurodiaconia is a registered asbl in Belgium. This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

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