



MPHASIS

Mutual Progress on Homelessness through Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems

Funded by EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
(VS/2007/0617 SI2.483181).

FINAL TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

December 2009



Research and action of the MPHASIS project are funded by the European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG under the employment and social solidarity programme known as PROGRESS (VS/2007/0617 SI2.483181).

Main contractor:

**Town and Regional Planning
University of Dundee
Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4HN
Scotland, United Kingdom**

Contact Details:

Bill Edgar: w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk
Barbara Illsley: b.m.illsley@dundee.ac.uk

Contract Partners:

Gesellschaft für Innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung, GISS (Germany),

Volker Busch-Geertsema vbg@giss-ev.de

Resource Information Service, RIS (UK),

Peter Watson peter.watson@ris.org.uk
Matt Harrison matt.harrison@ris.org.uk



<i>Table of contents</i>		<i>Page</i>
i	Acknowledgements	5
1	Purpose and Actions	6
	1.1 Description of Action	
	1.2 Dissemination Strand	
	1.3 Research Strand	
	1.4 Steering Group	
2	Dissemination Strand	8
	2.1 Introduction	
	2.2 National Meetings	
	2.3 MPHASIS Final Project Conference	
	2.4 MPHASIS website	
3	Research Strand	11
	3.1 Purpose of the Research	
	3.2 Research Briefs	
	3.3 Research Reports	
4	Outcomes and Policy Lessons	19
	4.1 General Context	
	4.2 National Meetings	
	4.3 Research Reports	
	4.4 Conclusions	

Appendix 1

1. Steering Group Minutes
 - a. January 2008;
 - b. October 2008;
 - c. May 2009
2. Minutes of Meeting of Project Partners, London, October 2009

Appendix 2

1. Synthesis Report in English
2. Briefing Seminar; Budapest, March 2008
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Minutes
3. National Meeting Documents by Country:
 - a. Agenda
 - b. National Position Paper
 - c. Stakeholder Powerpoints
 - d. Minutes of National Meeting
 - e. Outcome Statement (where available)

- f. Further Actions (where available)
- 4. Final Project Conference
 - a. Conference Programme
 - b. MPHASIS Final Conference Report.
 - c. Conclusions of the Final Project Conference
- 5. MPHASIS Website Screenshots

Appendix 3

- 1. Research Reports: Administrative Data – Prison Discharge
 - a. Norway: Measuring homelessness among ex-convicts and the prison population
 - b. Poland: Measuring Homelessness Among the Prison Population: A Case Study of the Polish Penitentiary System
- 2. Research Reports: Census – Population Registers
 - a. Germany: Census 2011 in Germany. The use of population register data for quantifying certain subgroups of homeless people
 - b. Slovenia: Census 2011 in Slovenia. Use of population register data for quantifying certain subgroups of homeless people
- 3. Research Reports: Service Provider Databases
 - a. Bulgaria: A Report on Good Practice for Developing a Service Provider Database and Improving Capacity for Data Collection about Homeless People in Bulgaria
 - b. Italy: A Report on the Transferability of Good Practice for Developing a Service Provider Database in Italy
 - c. Netherlands: A Report on the Transferability of Good Practice in Relation to Developing a Service Provider Database in the Netherlands
- 4. Research Reports: Client Recording System LINK Pilot
 - a. Hungary: Pilot of LINK Client Recording System in Hungary
 - b. Sweden: Pilot of LINK Client Recording System in Sweden
- 5. Research Reports: Data Extraction from Client Registers
 - a. France: Statistical information systems on homelessness in France. The findings of national inquiry 115 and information systems in the Rhône-Alpes and Poitou-Charente regions
- 6. Research Reports: Core Variables
 - a. Survey on the Use and Potential Harmonisation of Core Variables for Measuring Homelessness

Acknowledgements

The project co-ordinators wish to thank the hard work and support they received from the national co-ordinators and the members of the project steering group. Their details are listed below.

National Co-ordinators

<i>Country</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>E-Mail Address</i>
AUSTRIA	Sepp Ginner	BAWO	seppginner@nvnnet.at
BELGIUM	Ides Nicaise	UNIVERSITY OF LEUVEN	ides.Nicaise@hiva.kuleuven.be
BULGARIA	Iskra Dandolo	HOUSING AND URBAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION	dandolo_far@UACG.BG
CZECH	Klara Holanova	MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS	Klara.Holanova@mpsv.cz
FINLAND	Peter Fredriksson	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT	peter.fredriksson@ymparisto.fi
FRANCE	Samuel Lefloch	FNARS	samuel.lefloch@fnars.org
GREECE	Olga Theodorikakou	KLIMAKA	homeless@klimaka.org.gr
HUNGARY	Peter Gyori	MENHELY FOUNDATION	gyori_peter@yahoo.com
IRELAND	Mary Falvie	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT	Marie_falvey@environ.ie
ITALY	Paolo Pezzani	FIOPsd	presidenza@fiopsd.org
LATVIA	Ilze Vigante	CITY OF RIGA COUNCIL	Ilze.Vigante@riga.lv
LITHUANIA	Aurelija Dzedzeviciute	CARITAS	linas@caritas.lt
LUXEMBOURG	Cecile Kellens-Greisch	Ministry of Family Affairs	Cecile.Kellens-Greisch@fm.etat.lu
NETHERLANDS	Judith Wolf	UNIVERSITY OF NIMEGEN	J.Wolf@sg.umcn.nl
NORWAY	Liv Kristensen	HOUSING BANK	liv.kristensen@husbanken.no
POLAND	Peter Olech	POMERANIAN FORUM	biuro@pfbw.org.pl
PORTUGAL	Teresa Caeiro	ISS	Teresa.M.Caeiro@seg-social.p
ROMANIA	Ian Tilling	CASA IONA	office@casaoana.org
SPAIN	Pedro Cabrera	COMILLAS UNIVERSITY	pcabrera@chs.upcomillas.es
SWEDEN	Annika Remaeus	NHBW	Annika.Remaeus@socialstyrelsen.se

Steering Group

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
Freek Spinnewijn	FEANTSA	Freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org
Annika Remaeus	NHBW	Annika.Remaeus@socialstyrelsen.se
Peter Olech	POMERANIAN FORUM	biuro@pfbw.org.pl
Anne Morrisens	University of Leuven	<i>Attended First Meeting</i>
Hubert Krieger	FOUNDATION OF LIVING	Krieger@eurofound.europa.eu

1 Purpose and Actions

1.1 Description of Action

MPHASIS (Measuring Progress on Homelessness through Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems) was a two-year project funded by the European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities under the PROGRESS Initiative. It ran from December 2007 to December 2009. The main objective of MPHASIS was to improve monitoring of homelessness and of homeless policies in 20 European countries in a coordinated manner on the basis of the recommendations of the Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level study (Edgar, Harrison, Watson and Busch-Geertsema, 2007, financed under budget line VT/2005/024).

The MPHASIS initiative involved two main strands of action:

- 1 Implementation and dissemination of the recommendations of the Measurement of Homelessness research (Edgar et al, 2007);
- 2 Action-oriented research to examine in detail the issues involved in implementing some of the key recommendations of the research at national level.

1.2 Implementation and Dissemination Strand

This strand of the project involved the organisation of national meetings in each of the participating European countries and an EU level conference towards the end of the project. A national co-ordinator in each country assisted the Project Co-ordinators in arranging the national meetings which were attended by key stakeholders and experts in the field.

1.3 Research Strand

The overall aim of this strand was to progress some of the key technical recommendations of the Measurement of Homelessness study (Edgar et al 2007). The research, in the framework of this proposal, aimed to examine:

1. The transferability of good practice in relation to Service Providers Databases and Client Record Systems to EU member states in a manner that would facilitate the national aggregation of data on the users of homeless services. Research was commissioned in Italy, Netherlands, Bulgaria
2. The transferability of good practice on the use of Administrative Data (e.g. on prison population or hospital / institutional discharge population) or Survey Data (e.g. population register information) to EU member states.
3. The feasibility of harmonising the operational data definition of the Core Variables recommended in the Measuring Homelessness study.

1.4 *Steering Group*

An MPHASIS Steering Group was formed to represent key stakeholders and to act as a sounding board for the project co-ordinators in the implementation of the project.

The Group consisted of: the following members:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
Freek Spinnewijn	FEANTSA	Freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org
Annika Remaeus	National Board of Health and Welfare Sweden	Annika.Remaeus@socialstyrelsen.se
Peter Olech	POMERANIAN FORUM, Poland	biuro@pfbw.org.pl
Anne Morrisens	University of Leuven, Belgium	<i>Attended First Meeting</i>
Hubert Krieger	FOUNDATION OF LIVING	Krieger@eurofound.europa.eu

The Steering Group met on three occasions during the project (**Appendix 1.1**) and the research co-ordinators met together on one additional occasion. (**Appendix 1.2**).

2 Dissemination Strand

2.1 Introduction

Building on the commitment of the project partners in 20 European countries, the dissemination strand was organised around a series of national meetings held in each country and a Final Project Conference in Paris in September 2009.

A key first step was the preparation of the MPHASIS Synthesis Report which summarised the ideas and recommendations of the earlier Measurement of Homelessness study (**Appendix 2:1**). The Synthesis Report was translated into the 18 European languages of the participating countries and distributed to all stakeholders invited to the national meetings, thus ensuring that they had access to the material in their own language.

An opening seminar to brief national co-ordinators was held in Budapest in March 2008 (see **Appendix 2:2 for the agenda and minutes of the meeting**)¹. Led by the project partners, the seminar was used to introduce the MPHASIS project, to explore the role of the national co-ordinators in the project and to discuss the organisation of the national meetings and the anticipated outcomes. Each co-ordinator was asked to identify and invite relevant agencies to attend their national meeting, and to identify an independent individual to chair the session. This seminar was very helpful in clarifying the project and establishing an MPHASIS network.

2.2 National Meetings

National Meetings were held in all 20 partner countries between June 2008 and May 2009, as detailed in **Table 1**. A total of 425 individuals participated in the national meetings, in addition to members of the research team and interpreters. Meetings ranged in size from 16 to 39, with an average of 21. A common framework was used to structure the agenda of the national meetings but this framework was adapted by each national co-ordinators to reflect the position in their country and the issues of particular concern. Two principal researchers attended each meeting to introduce the

¹ Signed attendance lists of all meetings are available on request.

MPHASIS Project and a common power point presentation was used for this purpose. Interpreters were available at all meetings, as required.

Table 1: Details of Attendees at National Meetings and Opening Seminar

Meeting	Date of Meeting	Male	Female	Total	Research Partners	Interpreters
Opening	14/03/2008	17	13	30	5	0
Norway	12/06/2008	10	8	18	2	0
Luxembourg	29/09/2008	24	13	37	2	1
Austria	03/10/2008	15	6	21	2	2
Czech	24/10/2008	14	4	18	2	2
Ireland	07/11/2008	11	8	19	2	0
France	21/11/2008	11	8	19	2	2
Sweden	28/11/2008	11	19	30	2	2
Hungary	05/12/2008	14	9	23	2	2
Poland	05/12/2008	11	14	25	2	2
Netherlands	13/01/2009	14	8	22	2	2
Portugal	13/02/2009	14	22	36	2	2
Bulgaria	20/02/2009	7	9	16	2	1
Finland	27/02/2009	15	8	23	2	2
Romania	06/03/2009	8	10	18	2	2
Italy	13/03/2009	17	12	29	2	2
Spain	20/03/2009	21	18	39	2	2
Latvia	22/04/2009	9	15	24	2	2
Lithuania	20/04/2009	6	12	18	2	2
Belgium	08/05/2009	17	17	34	2	4
Greece	28/05/2009	25	12	37	2	2
Totals		291	245	536²	45	36
Total Excluding Research Partners and Interpreters				455		

The following national meeting documents are available, organised alphabetically by country (**Appendix 2:3**):

- Agenda for the National Meeting
- National Position Paper, written by the national co-ordinator for a national audience in English and the national language
- Power point presentations from national stakeholders (where available)
- Minutes of the National Meeting, including a set of action points

² This includes co-ordinators and interpreters in order to calculate the gender balance at meetings. The total attendees at meetings excluding research partners and interpreters is =

In a number of countries, the action points have been expanded into Outcome Statements, and in a few cases reports of subsequent action have also been prepared.

2.3 MPHASIS Final Project Conference

The MPHASIS Final Project Conference was held in the Novotel Charenton, Paris, on 17 September 2009. It was attended by 124 delegates, who came both from all of the participating countries as well as others including Germany, Denmark, Malta, UK and USA. The conference provided an opportunity to give feedback from the national meetings and as well as an overview by the project partners representatives from four countries set out their own experiences of progress in measuring homelessness made as a result of involvement in MPHASIS. The conference also allowed the research findings to be disseminated, with workshops held to discuss the main issues. The latter part of the event was used to debate and agree action for the future and this was summed up in a statement prepared jointly by Eric Marlier, the Conference Chair, and Bill Edgar. Feedback from the conference was extremely positive. The mix of participants, from different levels of government, NGOs, and academic institutions helped ensure an informed and lively debate.

Documentation from the Conference includes (**Appendix 2:4**):

- Conference Programme
- MPHASIS Final Conference Report.
- Conclusions of the Final Project Conference

2.4 MPHASIS Website

Throughout the Project, an MPHASIS website has been maintained to aid the dissemination of the work undertaken. This is hosted by the University of Dundee. Screenshots from the site are contained in **Appendix 2:5** and the information from the website, as of December 2009, can be found on the attached DVD.

3 Strand 2 – the Research Strand

3.1 Introduction

The research strand aimed to examine the transferability of good practice in relation to three main elements of measuring homelessness: Service Providers Databases and Client Record Systems; the use of Administrative Data; and the feasibility of harmonising the operational data definition of the Core Variables

The following countries were selected to progress this action-oriented research and were chosen to provide a range of experience overall in relation to homelessness policies and to provide a range of experience relevant to each of the specific research issues.

Research Element	Country	Agency undertaking the Research
	Italy	FIOPsd
Directory of Services	Netherlands	RIS and Federatie Opvang
	Bulgaria	HURA - Housing and Urban Research Association
LINK Client Record System Database	Sweden	Ersta Skondal University College
	Hungary	BMSZKIM - Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy
Data Extract Modules	France	FNARS
	Germany	Prof. Dr Susanne Gerull, Freelance Researcher
Population Register	Slovenia	University of Ljubljana
Administrative Data (Prison data)	Norway	Norwegian Institute for Urban & Regional Research
	Poland	Julia Wagnanska - Independent Researcher

3.2 Research Briefs

Research briefs were prepared and distributed to the selected contractors in March 2008 (the briefs are available on file, as are the contracting documents of which they form a part, if requested). The research was conducted during a period of nine to

twelve months from that date. In the case of the LINK Client Record database pilot some time was committed to selecting NGOs in each country to undertake the pilot, time was also required to translate the software into the national languages and to train staff in the use of the software. The three main contractors (Dundee University, GISS and RIS) supervised the progress of the research and commented on the draft reports.

3.3 Research Reports

3.3.1 Administrative Data

Administrative data relevant to homelessness and housing exclusion is collected by the state and/or municipal authorities in the course of their work. For some groups of homeless people this may be an important source of data – this is of particular relevance for homeless people in institutional settings. Research was commissioned into the prison population in Norway and Poland (**Appendix 3: 1a and 1b**) and how homelessness is defined, identified and measured in relation to people leaving prison in these countries .

The purpose of the research was to examine the use made of administrative data on people released from prison who have no home to go to. The research aimed to identify the procedures used and good practice models of using such data.

In Poland, 1,450 prisoners (from 90,000) leaving prison annually are registered as requiring support due to homelessness. This underestimates the scale of the real problem. Current procedures are based on individual assessment of housing status by prison officials. However, supporting vulnerable prisoners to acquire housing on release is not a priority for the penal system and homeless NGOs do not have the capacity to provide specific services for this group. Being a person without a permanent address has implications for the prisoners in relation to the parole and release date. Existing procedures screen the housing status of prisoners on three occasions. Article 38 of the Executive Penal Code sets the framework for cooperation with NGOs.

The research identified the need for more consistent protocols for discharge across the country and the need for coordination between the prison system and the local

authorities and NGOs. The research recommended the introduction of a unified procedure for defining homelessness status before release including the same set of questions taken into account across the whole country. At the time of the research existing paper-based registration systems were being transferred into a fully computerized (NOE.Net) database. It is also important to ensure that there is no relationship between data collection on housing and any consequences for receiving awards, passes and permissions during imprisonment

In Norway, the operational definition of a homeless person includes people without their own or rented accommodation and who is staying in one of five situations which includes a person that is under Criminal Services due to be released within two months and is without a dwelling of his or her own. More than 60% of inmates are homeless on this basis. Approximately 6,000 persons are released from prison to homelessness each year. Three main administrative registration systems have been used for collecting data on homelessness.

A range of issues were identified in the research in relation to this vulnerable group. The author identified a clear link between release on parole and the prisoners housing status. Satisfactory housing situation seems to be an almost mandatory rule for release. This has a direct impact on the reliability of data collection since inmates often give their address at time of imprisonment or give a false address. Furthermore, issues of data quality are evident in respect of housing status held in national local authority information system (KOMPIS). KOSTRA system holds information on the use of temporary accommodation *after release from prison and discharge from institution*. The research identified issues in the linking of data in separate systems.

The research concluded that – despite this issue being a key target in the national homelessness strategy – there is at the time of writing no national monitoring system on homelessness based on administrative data for this group. The registration of the housing status of convicts and persons on remand in KOMPIS database is not reliable or complete. Equally, questions on homelessness on release from prison have been taken out of the KOSTRA system. The most reliable statistics on homelessness among prisoners remains the national survey of homeless persons. The Criminal

Services Department has been a respondent in all four national surveys of homelessness.

3.3.2 *Census*

The recent EU Directive on the 2011 Census requires member states to count the whole population, including homeless people. Some countries have introduced population-registers to augment or replace the Census. Research was commissioned in two countries (Germany and Slovenia) to test how homeless people are or could be identified and measured in their population registers (**Appendix 3: 2a and 2b**).

12 countries intend to use registers or combination of register and survey in the next census. Germany and Slovenia were chosen since these countries had taken recent decisions to use register based methods for the census. The research aimed to answer two main questions: are homeless counted in the register based system?; are some categories of homeless difficult to count?

The research identified limits of register based systems in both countries. In Germany there is no central population register – local authorities are to provide information. The Register of Dwellings is still being established (7.5m owners). The Register of Special Dwellings is yet to be developed. Officials interviewed during the research identified specific issues in relation to linking registers as well as issues of data protection which will inhibit the ability to aggregate data. In Slovenia, the Register of Dwellings is also in the establishment phase and the eDatabase of Households is being computerised. The central population register links of relationships among persons is not complete.

Given these limitations, the research identified specific issues related to the limits of data collection on homeless people and identified that some groups of homeless would be difficult to reach. In Germany, rough sleepers and people living in emergency accommodation are not registered at any registry office. There are definition and identification issues in the use of the Register of Special Buildings to identify homeless accommodation. This is in part because homeless accommodation is diverse utilising different budgets and coming from a diverse range of providers. The use of fictitious addresses (at welfare departments or service provider addresses)

as a place of registration for homeless people is only partially used and is inconsistent across the country. Hence it is not possible to make estimates on the basis of such information. Community, institutional and emergency accommodation will probably be combined in a common group and so the homeless may be counted but can not be identified as a specific group.

In Slovenia, the Register of Buildings - “buildings for special purposes” – also includes a range of accommodation including maternity homes, shelters and asylums, homes for the elderly, student dorms in addition to homeless accommodation. The Residence Registration Act (2006) intends to register homeless people at the agency where they receive help but this requires a complete register of services which does not exist. It also requires the ability to identify homeless services which is not possible in the current register of special buildings. People living with family/friends will be excluded from the census data in both countries.

3.3.3 *Services*

A key recommendation of the Measuring Homelessness study (Edgar et al, 2007) was that countries should develop a database of service providers and the report specified a methodology for achieving this and a specification of the types of data that should be included. The MPHASIS project commissioned studies in three countries to pilot the proposed methodology - Bulgaria, Italy and Netherlands (**Appendix 3: 3a, 3b and 3c**). These countries exhibited different levels of service provision, existing systems of data collection and national government policy. The research in each country identified existing databases, stakeholders involved and specified the next steps to be taken to develop and maintain such databases.

The research lent support for the proposed methodology for developing databases which was relevant and appropriate in the different national contexts. It specified a staged approach and use of existing data. It provided evidence of common data collected about services in each country.

Partly in response to the MPHASIS project and research a new national database is being developed in Italy and there is a proposal for a new Shelter Atlas for the Netherlands. The research established the importance of the link with client data. It

further provided evidence to confirm the costs and timescales involved in developing and maintaining a provider database – both in terms of human resources and finance. Barriers and ways of overcoming them were also identified. It reinforced the argument in the original study that it is important to gain backing from government and key stakeholders and to have clarity of purpose for the database.

3.3.4 LINK Client Record System Pilot

Recent years have seen the widespread development of computerised client recording systems in homelessness services in most countries. However, no country has a comprehensive common client information system – although some are in development. One aim of the research was to test the applicability of one system (LINK) in different national contexts and to specify the issues involved in the transferability of such technology. For this purpose the LINK system – in use in the UK and Ireland – was adapted and piloted in Hungary and Sweden with a selection of service providers (**Appendix 3: 4a and 4b**).

For this purpose the LINK software was translated into Hungarian and Swedish. This involved translation of key variable terms as well as some re-programming of the software links and tools. Local NGOs in Budapest and Stockholm were identified to pilot the software with their clients and the pilot system was evaluated on that basis.

The pilot examined a number of issues affecting implementation including – data protection; translation; programme technical issues; conflicting needs of operational data collection and statistical data collection and the collection of data about users of low threshold services.

3.3.5 Data Extract Modules

The Measuring Homelessness study (Edgar et al, 2007) identified different options to implement the collection and aggregation of client information from service providers. One approach, adopted in Germany for example, is to develop modules to allow the extraction and collation of core variables from existing software already in use among service providers. The MPHASIS project commissioned research to look at this approach in the French situation and to identify the issues involved in

implementing such an approach and overcoming technical and management barriers (**Appendix 3: 5a**).

Three systems were examined at national, regional and local level (Poitou Charentes, COHPHRA and national system 115). The research began with a documentary analysis of the software used and conducted interviews with the key personnel in each information system.

While the research was being conducted work commenced in France with the aim of moving towards a computerised real time system of data collection which would be obligatory for all services for the homeless and would involve the development of a standard definition of variables.

The research confirmed that an information system requires a formal piloting policy to test the level of financial investment required by the public authorities; approaches to mobilize all actors to ensure cooperation. It also examined the definition of the needs of data collection in relation to the specification of the variables and data items and the standardisation of the nomenclatures used. An important component discussed by the research was the specification of the definition of the theoretical and geographical perimeter of the services to be covered. Importantly, to ensure cooperation of organizations and field-workers it is essential to have transparency on the application of the data collection and its development.

Barriers to the implementation of this approach were examined including the degree of computerisation of services, the training of operational staff, the confidentiality of data collected, the reproduction of data uploads, the use of data for purposes of management control, and the impact of information systems on the practices of social work interventions.

3.3.6 Core variables

The Measuring Homelessness report proposed a set of Core Variables about homeless people. This was a restricted number of variables which should be collected across Europe using the same definitions. This would provide the basis for information about the profile of homeless people in Europe. The MPHASIS research carried out a

survey of 20 countries to test the proposed core data set (**Appendix 3: 6a**). Questionnaires were sent to 20 countries and 20 responses were received from 15 countries. This demonstrated that each of the proposed core variables is used by a majority of the existing systems. All systems collect data on age and sex of homeless people. Most systems collect information on Nationality, Country of birth and Household structures/living situations. Some modifications are suggested to align these variables with Eurostat recommendations for core social variables. The majority of systems collect information about previous accommodation, duration of homelessness and reasons for homelessness. However, there are lower levels of standardisation of variables in these areas. The research proposed some changes to variable definitions but recommends that each category should be maintained.

4 Outcomes and Policy Lessons

4.1 General Context

The MPHASIS project involved 20 countries which were all at different stages in the development of homeless strategies and level of knowledge about the nature and causes of homelessness. While it was challenging to manage national meetings across so many countries it proved to be an important impact of the project to test the robustness of the recommendations of the Measuring Homelessness study across such a broad range of national experience.

The research of the project involved 10 countries in five main topics of research. Two of these countries were not part of the 20 partners hence broadening the reach of the project. Targeting the five areas of research on specific countries allowed us to pilot the methodology of data collection (in relation to the development of service provider databases and the client recording systems) and to examine the nature of specific issues (the use of the census to collect data, the use of administrative data) from which we could draw conclusions of relevance to all member states.

4.2 National Meetings

The basis of the national seminars was the presentation of the methodology and recommendations of the Measuring Homeless study. However, the focus of the meeting was determined and agreed with the national co-ordinator in the light of the national position paper and current developments in the data collection. This meant that the discussion in the meeting had relevance for all the main stakeholder agencies who participated. A key contribution of the MPHASIS project was to facilitate the meeting of all relevant stakeholders for the first time in most countries to discuss this issue. Examination of the outcome statements from these meetings demonstrates that in many countries the decision was taken to continue the momentum of the meeting either with follow-up meetings or exploration of the establishment of a working group to take forward the discussion and proposed actions.

The range of stakeholders who participated (455 in total) demonstrates the appetite for seminars to allow exchange of views and knowledge transfer. The MPHASIS project has provided the base from which future national and European level meetings

can be developed on this issue. The nature of the discussion in all these meetings also demonstrates the need for appropriate guidance on key aspects of data collection on homelessness and housing exclusion. Such guidance is needed on matters which are correctly the responsibility of the national authority, but our conclusion from the national seminars and the final conference proceedings is that the EU also has a role to play in providing guidance (e.g. on issues related to the census, data protection and the development of indicators).

The major issues of policy that can be summarised here in relation to the lessons drawn from the national seminars are summarised below under four main headings: national governance, networking, monitoring progress, and guidance.

4.2.1 National Governance

- a. *Stakeholder involvement led by government:* all key stakeholders have to be actively involved in the measurement and monitoring of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (HHE); these include the Ministries and public bodies who are expected to lead in this area as well as statistical institutes, service providers, academics and people having experience of HHE.
- b. *Cooperation:* close cooperation between all these key stakeholders is required. In addition, cooperation between data users and data producers needs to be improved to ensure that there is transparency in the purpose for data collection and that there is also a feedback to data producers to contribute to improving the quality of the information provided.
- c. *Action at all levels:* concerted action across the different policy levels (local, regional and national) and within each area (welfare, judiciary, health, etc.) is essential.

4.2.2 Networking

The evidence from the MPHASIS national meetings clearly demonstrates not only a demand for but also the significant added value of transnational learning and exchange in this area. Countries need to take advantage of all the opportunities that will allow developing such learning and exchange; the 2010 European Year for

Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion should provide a unique momentum for a leap forward.

- a. *Process and instruments:* regular Peer Reviews and Mutual Exchange seminars are needed to ensure further progress is made in the fight against HHE. Other methods, such as the 2010 EU “Consensus Conference” planned by FEANTSA, should also be explored.
- b. *Data collection:* transnational cooperation on HHE data collection should be continued with EU funding contribution (e.g. through the PROGRESS programme).
- c. *Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC):* it is essential that HHE issues be considered an integral part of the Social OMC and be consolidated and continued post 2010.

4.2.3 *Monitoring progress*

- a. *Strategic approach:* in the next round of the *National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSRSPSIs)* which each EU Member State will have to submit to the European Commission, there should be a formal commitment to prevent and reduce HHE. For this, the Guidelines for the next round of NSRSPSIs should formally require countries to report on the information strategy they have (or are putting) in place to count and monitor HHE in the framework of the harmonised ETHOS definition³.
- b. *Data sources:* a single data source is not enough for a proper count and monitoring of HHE: each country has to identify a good national “package” of available data sources (e.g. surveys, registers and clients’ record data) and to develop its statistical capacity as required at national and sub-national level.
- c. *Indicators:* on top of the recently agreed EU indicators on overcrowded households and households burdened with housing costs, the NSRSPSIs should report as a minimum on indicators derived from the ETHOS categories 1 and 2 (i.e., Rough sleepers and People in emergency hostels).

³ See: <http://www.feantsa.org/files/freshstart/Toolkits/Ethos/Leaflet/EN.pdf>.

4.2.4 *Guidance*

There was a general call for guidance on developing HHE Strategies and HHE Information Strategies. There are action points referring to the need for EU guidance on specific issues, which include the following:

- a. *Core socio-demographic variables* to be collected in the context of HHE statistics: EU recommendations put forward in this field by Eurostat should be followed.
- b. *Data protection*: not only legal but also trust and partnership issues need to be addressed.
- c. *2011 Census*: the next census to be carried out in 2011 in the various EU countries will have to cover homeless people; in this context, it is important and urgent to reflect on the best ways to cover and report on at least ETHOS categories 1 and 2. There should be transparency in the documentation and dissemination of the census methods being adopted to count homeless people and people suffering other forms of housing exclusion.

4.3 *Research*

The purpose and substantive issues involved in the research is described in section 3 above. In this section we summarise some of the key policy lessons that we draw from the research and from the discussions in the national seminars and European conference.

4.3.1 *Core Variables*

Based on the responses received from 15 countries, we have confirmed the integrity of the core variables recommended in the Measuring Homelessness study and have revised the definition of specific variables (see **Appendix 3**). These variables are, where relevant, consistent with the recommended definitions of core social variables in the Eurostat Task Force on Core Social Variables Final Report (2007).

We recommend that national governments adopt these core variables as the basis for collation of data on homelessness.

4.3.2 *Census*

We commissioned studies in two countries which are adopting register-based approaches to the census in 2011 (see **Appendix 3**). We also prepared a paper which was presented to the UNECE/CES conference in Geneva in October 2009 discussing the use of the census to collect information on homeless (Edgar and Busch-Geertsema,2009; see **Appendix 3**).

On the basis of this experience we make three main recommendations:

- 1 Census offices should publicise the methodology they intend to adopt to count the primary homeless in the census.
- 2 The definition of collective living situations should include an ability to collate different forms of living situation (such as homeless hostels) so that the homeless can be separately identified.
- 3 Countries using register-based systems for compiling census records should examine and publish the method by which they will register people in different categories in the Measuring Homeless definition (categories 1, 2, 3 and 6).

Since our research focussed on two countries we also conclude that there is a need for further research focused on administration registers (population, dwelling, employment...) and service providers' registers is needed to improve coverage of individual registers and links between registers.

Discussion during the national seminars and the final conference reinforce our conclusion drawn from the research on register-based census, that our knowledge of HHE in conventional dwellings should be improved. One possibility worth investigating is the use of specific modules in existing household surveys (e.g. in the *Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)*).

Furthermore, given the difficulties in enumerating the hidden homeless – e.g. people living temporarily with family and friends, then targeted research is needed to better identify and understand the situation of vulnerable groups such as people in temporary accommodation and living temporarily with family and friends.

4.3.2. Administrative Data

In most of the countries participating in MPHASIS, ex-prisoners form a significant segment of the homeless population. A number of countries (e.g. Finland, Norway, Sweden) include people due for release from prison within two months with no home in their official definition of homelessness. This is also the definition incorporated into the harmonised definition in the Measuring Homelessness study. Despite the fact that prisons and Justice Departments collect a range of administrative data on prisoners, no country in Europe maintains information on the numbers at risk of homelessness on release. Our research in Norway and Poland identified a number of issues related to improving systems for the use of this administrative data and integrating it into homeless statistics.

Three main policy lessons can be drawn from the research. First, module discharge protocols are needed to ensure consistency in approach between prisons across the country and to enable co-ordination between prison authorities and local authorities especially in the sharing of this information. Second, the system of housing advice and support for prisoners (and related information gathering) should not be linked to conditions of their parole or release. Third, consistency in data collection needs to be underpinned by the use of common software systems. This will allow the extraction of core variables on this group to be integrated into homeless information systems and collated for publication at regional and national level.

4.3.3 Service Provider Databases

The methodology proposed in the Measuring Homeless study for the development of service provider databases was piloted in Italy, the Netherlands and Bulgaria. The methodology proved to be robust and specific lessons were learnt about the implementation of such databases. The definition of a typology of homeless services is in itself a valuable learning exercise for stakeholders. The positive experience in Italy and the Netherlands clearly demonstrates the importance of governance issues in the development and implementation of such databases. In Italy the involvement of ISTAT in the research process was significant. In the Netherlands, the importance of government funding for a system to be managed by the umbrella homeless

organisation was crucial. In Bulgaria, by contrast the lack of government involvement or of any priority to the issue was responsible in large measure for lack of progress.

The research demonstrated the importance of clarity of purpose during the development of the database. However, it is also clearly identified that provider databases can provide different functions – supply data can be derived, sampling frames for surveys are available, and the database can be developed as a referral system in real time.

4.3.4 Client Record Systems

Knowledge transfer is a key objective of the PROGRESS initiative. This aspect of our research aimed to pilot the use of client record software which is in use in Ireland and the UK in order to identify the issues involved in transfer of systems. The LINK software was tested in countries with very different service structures and in agencies with different information requirements. The research in both countries identified specific obstacles which had to be addressed to allow the effective implementation of the software. However, professionals using the system were convinced that it was useful and had advantages by allowing them to monitor the development of homeless people as well as to see patterns with the group of clients. The importance of training and of the transparency of use of the data is essential. In Sweden in particular regulations governing data protection were also seen as an obstacle. Since this system (and others like it) is in common use in a number of countries this raises the question about the different interpretation of directives on data protection and points to the need for guidance from the EU.

4.3.5 Data Extract Modules

The research undertaken in France, specified a number of management and governance issues affecting the implementation of an approach involving data extraction from existing software programmes. These include the need for joint institutional policy working needed with a range of stakeholders; the co-ordination by the State or regional government; a degree of flexibility allowing for various options. It also argues forcibly for systems to be obligatory for those providing services to homeless and for the need for incentive measures. Although the successful

implementation of such an approach requires clear management by the service provider organisations, the approach has clear pay-offs since systems provide tools for the organisation (e.g. management and operational information and reports) as well as on-line benefits.

4.4 Conclusions

The Social OMC has played a valuable role in bringing increased attention to HHE issues in the EU. It has also deepened the analysis and understanding of the nature of HHE and the range of policies necessary to both prevent and address them. The process has created considerable opportunities for Member States to learn from each other's experience and it has supported the networking of people active on these issues. This has been facilitated by the work programme of FEANTSA, the four Peer Reviews carried out on homelessness (2004, 2005, 2006 and 2009), the Measuring Homelessness study (2007) and the MPHASIS project (2007-2009). Important progress is being made in many Member States and this has been encouraged in several countries by the process of developing NAPs/inclusion. However, many countries still lack a sufficiently comprehensive approach and much remains to be done to develop effective responses to HHE.

The MPHASIS project has made an important contribution in bringing key stakeholders together in 20 countries to discuss their national approach to the definition, measurement and evaluation of homelessness. Although progress is being made on these issues of definition, measurement and evaluation, there is still much to be done in these areas if the potential benefits of transnational comparisons and learning are to be maximised.

In the light of this, it is vital that the progress made in relation to definition and monitoring of homeless information during the MPHASIS project be consolidated and further developed in the context of the EU2020 agenda. Thus, HHE should continue to be one of the key themes of a renewed Social OMC. However, the work needs to be more effective and generate real outcomes. It needs to be planned in a more systematic and integrated manner. Monitoring and reporting on progress should also

be greatly enhanced. In the light of the above, we would make the following recommendations for strengthening EU action on HHE in the future.⁴

4.4.1 Strengthen political commitment

Our experience in the MPHASIS project clearly demonstrates that it is countries where HHE is a political priority that have made most progress in developing co-ordination between the key departments of government and with other relevant actors. This co-ordination is a vital component in developing effective strategies to address HHE and to develop effective monitoring procedures. The EU has an important role to play in the context of the EU2020 agenda to establish HHE as a key (national and EU) priority which should be reported on in the context of the NAPs/inclusion strand of the National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSRSPSIs).

4.4.2 Development of national strategies

Member States should be encouraged to develop comprehensive and integrated national strategies to prevent and address HHE and to report on these in the context of the NAPs/inclusion strand of the National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSRSPSIs). In developing such strategies, Member States should ensure that: the necessary arrangements are in place for the effective coordination and integration of policies relating to HHE; that effective links are established between the different levels of governance (national, regional and local) on HHE issues; that appropriate structures exist to ensure the ongoing involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies; and that at local level partnerships involving all relevant actors are established so as to ensure the coordinated and integrated delivery of policies and programmes on the ground in a flexible manner which is tailored to the needs of individuals.

⁴ The conclusions of the MPHASIS Final Conferencet (see *Outcome Statement from the Final MPHASIS Conference*: Edgar and Marlier, 2009) form the basis of these recommendations.

Member States who have not yet done so should be encouraged to set quantified targets for the reduction of HHE appropriate to their situation and to define indicators to monitor these targets.

The Commission and Member States should be encouraged to make as much use as possible of EU Structural Funds in support of their HHE strategies.⁵

4.4.3 Definition, Measurement and Monitoring

To enhance the EU involvement in HHE issues and to foster greater transnational exchange and learning the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and its Indicators Sub-Group (ISG) should promote agreement amongst Member States to apply a consistent official definition of homelessness.

In the context of the preparation for the 2011 Census, Member States should publish their official definitions of overcrowding and dwellings unfit for habitation. The NAPs/inclusion strand of the NSRSPSIs should report on these definitions and on official information related to dwelling quality and to overcrowding.

The European Commission and Member States should, in the context of the SPC, agree a common framework and common guidelines for measuring, monitoring and reporting on HHE.

Given that the legislative basis and governance of data collection on homelessness is only weakly developed in most countries, Member States should be encouraged to put in place a system for regularly collecting data on HHE and, as necessary, collating data from the regional and local levels. Because a single data source will not be enough for a proper count and monitoring of HHE, each country will need to identify a good national “package” of available data sources (e.g. surveys, registers, clients’ record data) and develop its statistical capacity as required.

⁵ If adopted, the recent Commission proposal (COM(2009) 382 final) to amend the regulations of the European Regional Development Fund to increase the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities in the newer Member States could play an important role in increasing resources for initiatives in these countries.

In the next Census, which will be carried out in 2011, for the first time it will be compulsory for all EU countries to collect information on homelessness. Therefore, the Commission and Member States, in the context of the SPC, might consider taking an initiative in consultation with all key stakeholders (i.e. Ministries and other public bodies in charge of HHE, statistical institutes, service providers, academics and people having experience of HHE) to develop broad guidelines with a view to ensuring that data on at least ETHOS categories 1 and 2 be collected in an effective and (reasonably) consistent way.⁶

The ISG new indicators on housing deprivation (especially in the field of poor quality housing), developed during the period of the MPHASIS project, will provide an important basis for comparative analysis. Work towards common EU indicator(s) on homelessness should continue.

4.4.4 Exchange and learning

The promotion of transnational exchange and learning through methods such as peer reviews, studies, networks, improved data collection and conferences have been an important contribution to improving homelessness strategies and data collection and should continue to be a key priority under the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS). However, such learning should be further enhanced by a greater clustering of stakeholders and different activities concerned with HHE in line with what was achieved in the context of the MPHASIS project (Edgar and Marlier 2009) and has been recommended by FEANTSA (Spinnewijn 2009).

⁶ Independent of this possible initiative, most important is that the National Statistical Institutes publish their methodology or plans to count primary homelessness (i.e., ETHOS 1). EU comparative data on some aspects of HHE could also usefully be collected through: a) questions on "hidden homelessness" that could be included in a module in the *Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC) instrument - i.e. questions aimed at identifying people living with family and friends due to a lack of housing (e.g. parents and married children sharing a dwelling), people living temporarily with family and friends due to homelessness (e.g. young people 'sofa surfing', homeless who move from hostel to friends to hostel...), etc.; and b) a comparative research project using consistent methodology in the capital/ main cities of each Member State to document the extent of and reasons for ETHOS 1 homelessness.

References

Edgar, W. (forthcoming), *Counting the homeless – improving the basis for planning assistance*, Social Inclusion Peer Review, Vienna: ÖSB.

Edgar W (2009), *A Statistical Review of Homelessness in Europe*, Brussels: FEANTSA.

Edgar, W. Harrison, M., Watson, P. and Busch-Geertsema, V. (2007), *Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level*, Brussels: European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities).

Edgar W. and Marlier, E. (2009), *Outcome Statement from the Final MPHASIS Conference*, Paris, September 2009, available from: www.trp.dundee.ac.uk/research/mphasis/.

Spinnewijn, F. (2009), How to Use the Open Method of Coordination to Deliver Policy Progress at European Level: The Example of Homelessness, *The European Journal of Homelessness* (3), pp. 301-316.