



The future of the welfare state in the Western Balkans  
Policy Analysis Laboratory School

# The EU policy approach to independent living

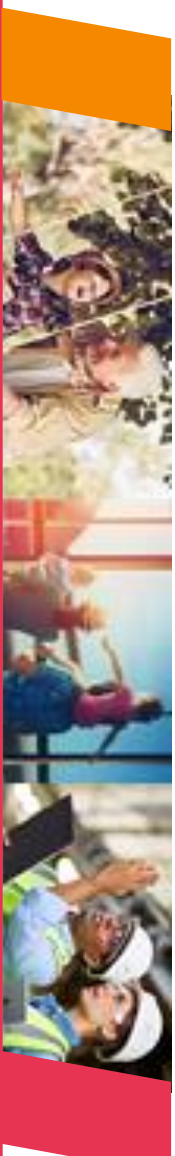
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Bečići (Montenegro), 22 Oktober 2019



## Content

- Introduction
- Concept of independent living – people with disabilities, children, homeless, older people
- Key indicators and challenges
- Policy development – people with disabilities, children, homeless, older people
- ESIF investments



# Introduction

- UN convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- UN convention on the rights of the child
- UN Principles for older persons
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- European Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- 2013 Commission Recommendation on Investing in children
- **European Pillar of Social Rights** (principles 1, 3, 9, 11, 18, 19, 20)



# Concept of independent living

- People with disabilities:
- Article 19 of the UNCPRD – Living independently and being included in the community – and UN interpretation guidance
- Both EU and MS are separate contracting parties to the UNCPRD. EU law obliges Member States to implement the Convention to the extent that its provision fall within the EU's competence. Independent living and social inclusion were identified as EU competence areas when the EU accepted the UNCPRD.
- Main implementation instrument at EU level: European Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU – Articles 21, 26



# Concept of independent living

- Children:
- Un Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children
- Children with disabilities
- Children refugees (unaccompanied minors)



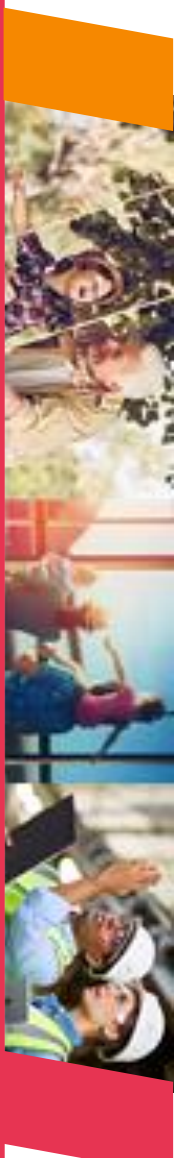
## Concept of independent living

- Homeless:
- No policy or legislative framework at EU-level providing a definition of independent living for people experiencing homelessness; no quality standards for services, nor benchmarks for measuring progress towards such standards
- Prevailing practice is an institutional-type of response
- *Right to housing* enshrined in several acts: European Charter of Fundamental Rights, Social Charter of the Council of Europe
- **European Pillar of Social Rights – Principle 19**



# Concept of independent living

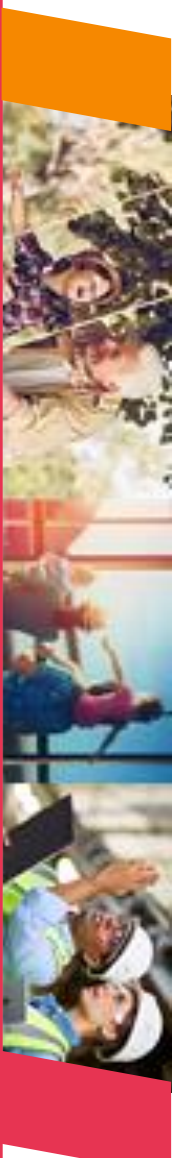
- Older people / People in need of long-term care (LTC):
- LTC needs tend to be far less well covered by social protection systems than health care needs
- In most EU Member States at least a part of the responsibility for LTC is placed with the family
- European Pillar of Social Rights – Principle 18 – affirms for the first time at EU level the right to long-term care services for persons who are reliant on care. Pillar privileges home-care and community-based services
- LTC provision is EU Member States responsibility; MS agreed on set of common objectives centred on access for all to affordable and financially sustainable high-quality long-term care. Cooperation on LTC issues in the Social Protection Committee.
- Employment aspects of LTC



## Key indicators and challenges

- No comparable data on the extent of independent living of persons with disabilities
- Indicators have been developed (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights), they are related to the UNCPRD article 19
- Measurement of quality of services difficult; Social Protection Committee 2010 issued “A voluntary European quality framework for social services”
- No single comparable comprehensive data source on total number of children residing in institutions in the EU (estimates around 400.000 – 500.000)
- Around 4.1 million street and shelter homeless in EU in a given year





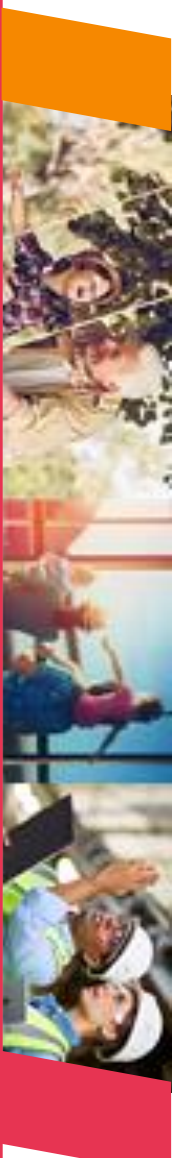
## Policy development

- People with disabilities:
- European Disability Strategy
- European Semester monitoring and recommendations – in 2018 ten countries got comments on independent living or de-institutionalisation in their country reports
- European Pillar of Social Rights – new Commission will present Action Plan for its full implementation
- Academic network of experts for disability (ANED)



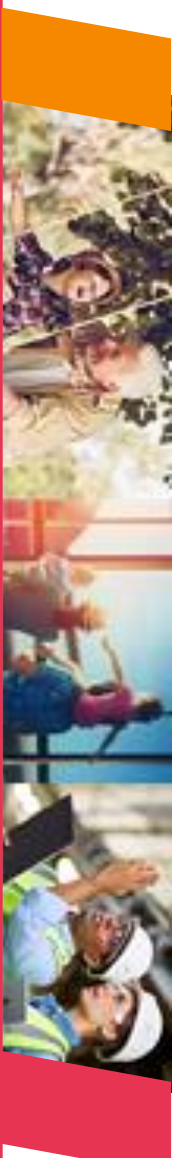
## Policy development

- Children:
- Commission Recommendation on Investing in Children (2013)
  - Strengthen prevention
  - Poverty must not be only reason for removing children from parental care
  - Ensure adequate gate-keeping
  - No expansion of institutional care settings
  - Ensure access to quality services
  - Support to children left behind
  - Children aged 0-3 not in institutions
  - Support to young persons aged 18+ for transition into independent living



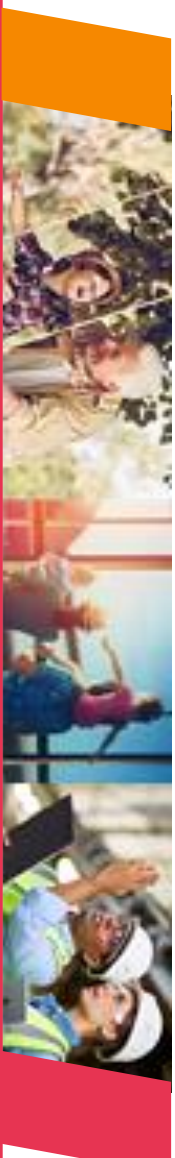
# Policy development

- Homeless:
- European Pillar of Social Rights
- New approach with »Housing first «



## Policy development

- Long-term care / Older people:
- Develop proactive and preventive responses to social protection against long-term care dependency



## ESIF investments

- Current period (2014-2020) :
- More focused use of the ESF to support the transition from institutional to community-based care, based on common guidelines
- A number of Member States included transition from institutional care to community-based care in their ESIF programming (EE, LT, LV, SI, SK, CZ, HU, PL, RO, HR, EL, BG)
- ESF+ 2021-2027 will continue the approach for all target groups
- Experience shows that integrated use of EU and national funds is necessary in programming DI measures



# Thank you!

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