

# EU Social Inclusion Policy and the Progress of the Homeless Policy in the Baltic States. Analysis of the National Action Plans of Social Inclusion 2004–2006, 2006–2008, 2008–2010

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*Šis straipsnis yra parašytas remiantis autorių atliktais tyrimais bendradarbiaujant su FEANTSA (Nationalinių organizacijų, dirbančių su benamiais, Europos federacija). Daugelyje Europos Sąjungos šalių narių benamių problemos pradėtos viešinti, o vėliau ir spręsti praėjusio šimtmečio septiniuolios–aštuntuoju dešimtmetyje. Lietuvoje, Latvijoje ir Estijoje apie benamystę kaip socialinę problemą pradėta kalbėti tik paskutinio praėjusio šimtmečio dešimtmėčio viduryje. Per šiuos keturiolika metų visuomenės ir valdžios dėmesys benamystės problemai išgyveno tris etapus: 1) iki 1995 metų benamystės problema neigiama ir ignoruojama; 2) 1995–2005 metais – problema pripažįstama, siūlomos pirmosios priemonės jai spręsti (per 2001 metų surašymą bandyta įvertinti benamių skaičių, priimti teisiniai dokumentai ir numatomos priemonės; 3) po 2005 metų problema mažai akcentuojama, prioritetas teikiamas kitoms socialinėms problemoms. Tai atspindi visų trijų Baltijos šalių vyriausybių priimtuose nacionaliniuose socialinės aprėpties priemonių planuose, tarp kurių 2004–2006 metų plane keliami benamių problema ir numatytos priemonės, o vėlesni planai suteikia prioritetą šeimos, vaikų skurdo mažinimo, užimtumo didinimo klausimams. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami trijų šalių būsto politikos bei benamystės problemų sprendimo panašumai ir skirtumai bei Europos Sąjungos įtaka, pasireiškianti sudarant nacionalinius socialinės aprėpties didinimo planus ir vykdant numatytas priemones. Visų trijų Baltijos šalių benamystės politikoje akcentuojamas apgyvendinimas. Nakvynės namai – tai pagrindinė benamiams teikiama paslauga. Ši priemonė yra būtina, bet, deja, nėra integruojanti. Straipsnio pabaigoje pateikiama siūlymų, kaip galima plėsti socialinių paslaugų įvairovę, pabrėžiamas šios grupės gyventojų įtraukimas į visuomenę ir darbo rinką.*

The article we would like to present is a part of the research carried out in cooperation with FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) and national social agencies. The aim of the article is to explain and describe the institutional and cultural changes taking place in the context of the so called "double" transition process that was observed in the Baltic States Central- and East- European (CEE) countries at the end on the 1980s. Parallel processes that can be recognized in the context of the development of anti-poverty politics at the national and supranational (EU) level will also be described and explored in the given paper.

The purpose of the given analysis is the following : 1. To describe general differences in the social protection system of the Baltic States, with a focus on housing politics; 2. To analyze homelessness as a form of European Union's social inclusion politics in national politics, using NAP-s (National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion).

1. The lack of dwelling space and queues to get an apartment are the characteristics of the Soviet regime period in Eastern Europe. In the socialist society the lack (shortage) of housing was a problem that attracted rather much attention. In the Baltic States people's spatial behavior and factors affecting it were extensively studied since 1970s. Physical state of housing, satisfaction with

living conditions and requirements about the dwelling and other similar topics were in the focus of social psychological, sociological as well as human geographical studies. The studies carried out in the 1970-1980 indicated that the socialist economic system failed to eliminate the differences in the living conditions and a way of life. Under the veil of the slogan proclaiming the creation of a uniform, homogeneous society, differentiation of living conditions resulted in the fact that in some cases the character of segregation was assumed

2. The social transition in Estonia, Lithuania and other Central and Eastern European countries from the late 1980s was highly systemic and covered without exception all aspects of social life. (Lauristin, 1997, et al.). The general changes characteristic of the post-communist states in this period are transition from totalitarianism to democracy, from planned economy to market economy, from centralized governance to decentralized polity and the replacement of solidarity as a dominant value by the individualistic pursuit of well-being. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that from the viewpoint of social politics, besides CEE, the West European states are in transition as well (Lagerspetz, 1997).

Concepts of equality, accessibility and affordability are important factors to describe social development. Norris & Shields (2004, 2007) describe living conditions in the enlarged European Union in the following way: : good housing conditions in the „long standing“ northern member states, average conditions in most of the remaining „long-standing“ member states and poor conditions in many of the „new“ Central and Eastern European member states.

**Table 1 Quality and affordability of housing in selected European countries (data of 2000–2003)**

	Tap water	Lavatory	Bath/shower	Average floor area (in m <sup>2</sup> )	Housing costs (% of household consumption expenditure)
Denmark	99,9	99,9	94,3	109,3	27,8
Finland	98	96	99	85,7	25,7
Sweden	100	100	100	71	29,4
Estonia	82	72	68	68,9	22,2
Latvia	83,2	77,8	67	40-60	21,3
Lithuania	83,2	77,8	67	40-60	21,3

Source: *Housing Statistics in the European Union. 2006. Rome*

3. Extensive internal migration and urbanisation created an urgent need for the dwelling space, which could not be satisfied due to inadequate construction work. Homelessness as a phenomenon did not officially exist in the soviet society and with the help of the militia it was controlled efficiently. Obligatory address registration and the control of it made people find formal places of residence. Homelessness was handled as antisocial behaviour and repeatedly apprehended persons who failed to possess a registered address were punished for vagrancy. . The lack of dwelling space was alleviated by a widely spread system of hostels for workers. According to the census carried out in 1989 over 80 thousand people in Estonia (5% of the whole population) lived in hostels. Workers' hostel was a unique social institution. It was a measure to solve the primary need for dwelling place for grown up orphans, former prisoners and immigrants (Kõre, 1998).

4. Homelessness has significantly grown since 1980s . In Europe the number of homeless was 1,8 million in 1995 (Avramov, 1995), and has approximately grown by 1/3<sup>rd</sup> in last decade.

According to the data of FEANTSA, the states of European Economic Area are divided into three groups according to the rates of homelessness (high, medium and low homelessness rates).

The comparison of data presented in Tables 1 and 2 show that there is no direct link between the rates of homelessness and living conditions (the quantity and quality of living space).

**Table 2. The scale of homelessness within the European Economic Area:  
homeless people per one thousand inhabitants (early 1990s).**

High rates (< 4 per 1000)	Medium rates (1-2 per 1000)	Low rates (>1 per 1000)
France; Germany; United Kingdom	Austria; Finland; Ireland; Italy; Norway; Sweden	Belgium; Denmark; Greece; Iceland; Luxemburg; Netherlands; Portugal; Spain

Source: *Strategies to combat homelessness. 2000*

In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania homelessness became a social problem in the middle of 1990. In all three countries, there is only supposed speculative data on the number of homeless, but in experts' opinion the number is growing (Kährik, Tiit, Kõre, Ruoppila 2003; Karpuskiene, 2005; Dobelniece, 2007). However, the homelessness is not the problem of the last decade in the Baltic States.

In the census of 2000/2001 the persons considered homeless were those, who did not have any housing enabling permanent shelter at night. Based on this definition only 0.03% of the population considered themselves homeless in Estonia and Lithuania according to the census (see Table 3). If the homeless scales of FEANTSA (Table 2) were used, the rate of homelessness in these countries would be very low. Although the principles and definitions used in the poll were complied with those of EUROSTAT, the number of homeless arrived at in the census is still unreliable.

**Table 3. Population by type of dwelling (in thousands)**

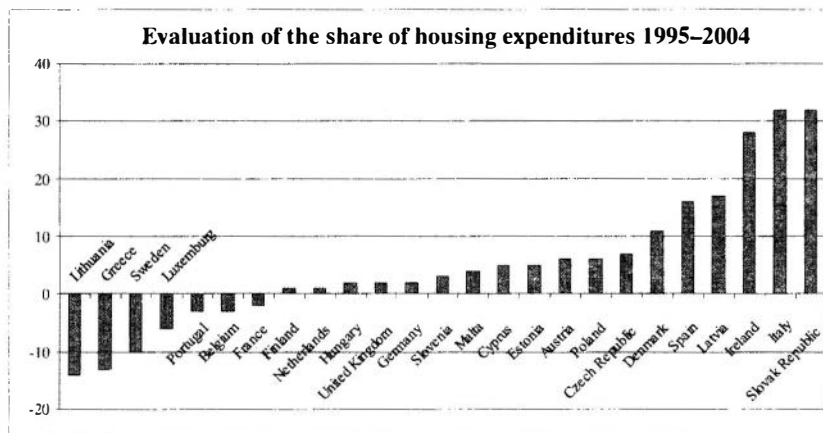
	All residents	People, living in private households	People, living in institutional households	Other (incl. homeless persons)
Estonia	1 370, 2	1 354,2	12,6	0,4
Latvia	2 377,4	2 354,6	22,8	-
Lithuania	3 484,0	3 459,7	23,1	1,2

Source: Census 2000/2001

Experts, who evaluated the social protection in the East European countries (Eatwell and others, 2000), claim that homelessness in these countries is mostly a problem in the capital cities. Capitals are the most dynamic places, and at the same time the social relations and networks of their residents are weaker and more superficial than those of the residents of small towns and rural communities. Capitals attract people with different social backgrounds from all over the country (Eatwell,..... 2000).

5. At the beginning of 1990 and 2000, the housing expenditures rose significantly in all Baltic States. The growth of income has softened this tendency. In the period of 1995–2005, the housing expenditures showed a slight decrease in Lithuania.

Figure 1. Evaluation of the change of the share of housing expenditures in total I expenditures in the period of 1995–2004.



Source: *First colloquium "Current developments in housing policies and housing markets in Europe...2006*

The share of households, for which housing costs were “a heavy burden” has decreased (by 2007) – in Latvia 28,5% of households considered their housing costs to be a heavy burden, in Lithuania 27,2% and in Estonia 28,2%. But poorest households (the ones represented in the 1st and 2nd quintile) feel the burden of the housing costs much more explicitly, regardless of this general positive trend.

6. Development of the housing sector in the Baltic States in 1990s has been influenced by the liberal reforms implemented after the collapse of the communist regime in 1991. Welfare issues were of minor importance, and became part of political agendas at the end of 1990s (Hendrikson and others, 2000). Following the oil crisis in 1970s, West European states started reforms in welfare state (welfare state crisis, see Pierson et al), which also had an influence on the social policy of Central and Eastern European states. . The characteristics of West European housing politics of 1980-1990s are as follows: 1. Decentralisation of housing policy (closer contact with users); 2. Privatisation of public housing (longer term implications); 3. Reduction of public finance economic viability/commodification, 4. Home-ownership seen as the tenure of aspiration (asset based welfare state). Privatisation of housing, restitution (the return of the illegally expropriated property back to their owners of the pre-war (WW II) period and the development of housing market (liberalisation of property transactions, liberalisation of rents etc.) were three pillars of housing reforms in the Baltic States of 1990s. The techniques of privatisation differ from state to state, but general results are similar. The dominant form of home ownership in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania is owner-occupied housing. Today, there are many new tendencies in the West European states’ (UK, France, Spain) housing policy: 1. Recognition of severe shortage of affordable housing, which make governments take measures to increase the supply; 2. Social (affordable) housing back on the political agenda and; 3. Policies and incentives to increase the supply of rental dwellings (in general, and social rental in particular) (Cosme, 2008). Only Lithuanian housing strategy 2020 has some similarities to their housing politics.

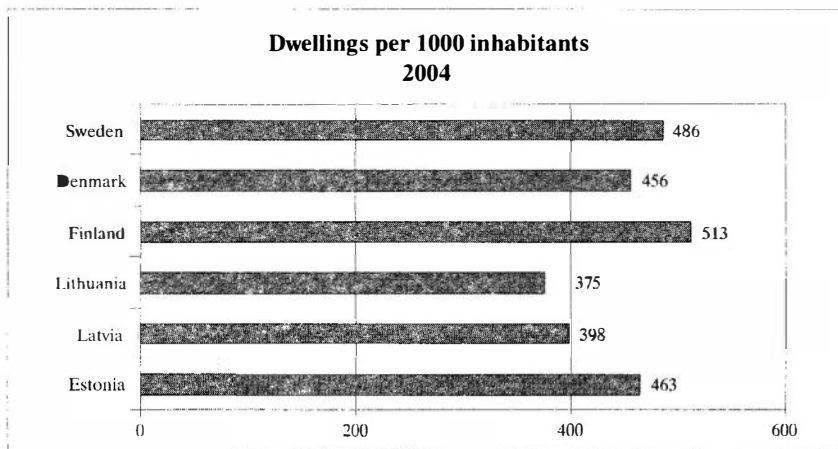
7. Having analyzed the housing politics of the European Union’s candidate countries FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) stated the following in 2003: “The housing situation in the Accession States is quite different. All Accession

States face the following urgent problems to different degrees: 1) Reduced role of public authorities in the area of housing; 2) very difficult access to housing for low-income families due to dramatically reduced public housing sector and very small private rental sector; 3) rapidly deteriorating quality of the housing stock; 4) increasing poverty among homeowners; 5) no comprehensive homeless policies. ([http://feantsa.org/files/DOCS/EN/housing\\_accession\\_states.doc](http://feantsa.org/files/DOCS/EN/housing_accession_states.doc))

FEANTSA concludes, that the NAPsIncl has indicated a clear change in the importance attached to homelessness and housing in different EU Member States, which is clear from the evaluation reports produced by the European Commission over the past 5 years: from homelessness and housing as urgent policy issues for some Member States (1st Joint Inclusion Report 2001), for most Member States (2nd Joint Inclusion report 2004), for all new Member States (Report on NAPsIncl of new Member States 2005), to homelessness as one of the 7 key priorities for all 25 Member States (1st Joint Report Social Protection & Social Inclusion 2005) (FEANTSA statement of the urgent need to tackle homelessness: a key message of the 2007 Joint report on social protection and social inclusion. March 2007).

8. In 1992, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the National Housing Program until 2005. In 2004 in compliance with changes of the state economic situation and experience of implementing the Housing Program, the Government approved the Lithuanian Housing Strategy until 2020. The first national conceptual views on housing reform in Latvia were formulated in 1996, two major policy documents – „The National Action Plan” of the National Report for Habitat II Conference (Istanbul 1996) and „The Housing Policy Concept” were developed and approved. The Estonian government approved the Estonian national housing strategy in February 2003. The new (second) housing strategy for 2008-2013 was approved in January 2008. In Estonia and Latvia the capital cities Tallinn and Riga have approved their local housing strategies.

Figure 2. Dwellings per 1000 inhabitants (2004)



Source: *Housing Statistics in the European Union. 2006. Rome*

9. The supply of housing is on average relatively good in the Baltic States (total number of dwellings even exceeds the number of households, or are in balance) although the structural distribution of the housing stock does not correspond to the social needs. There is a lack of adequate standard for housing in larger urban areas, often more than one generation have to occupy the same dwelling because most of the young people fail to have access to housing. A large number of dwellings are located in multi-apartment buildings.

**Table 4. Housing situation: number of households and dwellings**

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Total population (thousands)	1342,4	2281,3	3384,9
Total number of households (thousands)	582.1	802,8	1356.8
Total number of inhabited dwellings (thousands)	537,9	795,7	1190,6
Vacant conventional dwellings (%)	10,9 <sup>1</sup>	0,3 <sup>2</sup>	3,7 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2002; <sup>2</sup>2005; <sup>3</sup>2001

Source: 2000 Round Off Population and Housing Censuses in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. 2003. Vilnius; Housing Statistics in the European Union. 2006. Rome

10. The political views in the Baltic States on the issue of homelessness vary from „an unimportant issue“ to „the least important issue“. A very small municipal rental sector does not allow to implement such approaches as „Housing first“ etc. (First colloquium Current developments in housing policies and housing markets in Europe: implications for the social housing sector. Brussels. 13 September 2006). There is also lack of experience in the cooperation with the private sector to house the persons who have social problems. The work with the homeless is based on the step by step approach in finding solutions, starting with the re-socializing and ending up with housing. The general scheme is similar in all three countries (shelter-> rehabilitation centre-> transitional housing (social dwelling) -> normal housing in private or public sector). In Estonia, there is a support (supported living) in some cases for persons, who have entered the open rental market.

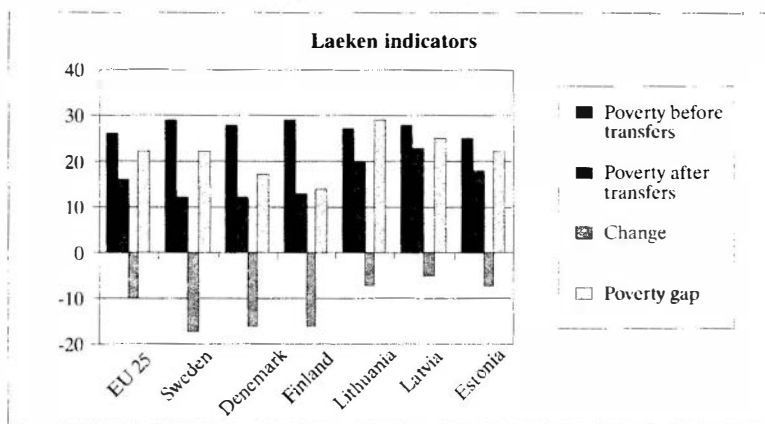
**Table 5. Basic indicators of the housing stock**

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Total floor space (thousand m <sup>2</sup> )	3 8760,0	6 0064,7	8 2120,2
Private ownership (% by floor space)	97,2	88,4	97,1
Average useful floor space per capita (m <sup>2</sup> )	28,9	26,4	24,4
Number of social dwellings	2987	1200	NA

Source: Statistics Estonia; Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia; Department of Statistics Lithuania

11. The social situation and the social policy in the Baltic States is similar. The attitude towards homelessness as a problem is influenced by the following circumstances: first, the percentage of persons of the society who have problems of subsistence, is high (in Lithuania 21%, in Latvia 19% and in Estonia 18% persons live on the brink of poverty; the EU 25 average is 16%, EUROSTAT, 2005).

Figure 3. Relative poverty (Laeken indicators, 2005)



Source: EUROSTAT

The focus is on children, elderly and disabled persons. Second, the Baltic States are moving towards the neo-liberal approach in social protection (from welfare state to workfare state). Third, social-welfare is not a part of the social policy the responsibility to offer social services lies on the local governments. Lithuania and Latvia try to even up the social service organisation by validating service standards. Estonia started with working out the standards for state based services in 2000, but current success is moderate

12. The political stance towards homelessness as a problem has had 3 stages through 1990-2000. In early 1990s: "*denial of the problem*". The example is the second UN conference on human settlements (Habitat II) in 1996 in Istanbul where the Lithuanian speaker, a representative of the Ministry of Environment of Lithuania said, "... Lithuania does not have the problem of homelessness as well as uncontrolled growth of cities..." To some extent these words represent the opinion of the politicians of the Baltic States. In fact, the phenomenon of homelessness had evolved in all three Baltic countries in the middle of the 1990s. The second half of 1990s: "*the acknowledgement of the problem*". The first half of years 2000: "*acknowledgement of homelessness as a less important problem*".

In the social protection research funded by the European Commission (Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries, Estonia Country Report, October 2002; Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries, Lithuania Country Report, October 2002, Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries, Latvia Country Report, January 2003), the countries point out different poverty endangered groups. Estonian (jobless households, families with 3 or more children, single-parent families) and Latvian (families with children and households with unemployed persons) vulnerable groups differ significantly from those of Lithuania (unemployed, households of persons living on social benefits, raising three or more children, farmers and rural residents).

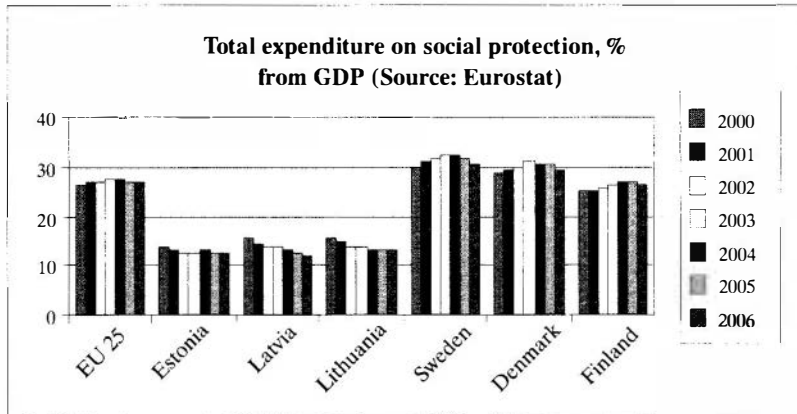
13. Homelessness is an extreme form of poverty. In the second half of 1990s poverty in the Baltic States was studied rather extensively with the help of the UN Development programme, above all on the basis of Household Budget Survey (HBS) data (Estonian human development report, 1999). Unfortunately, those studies failed to include the homeless as well as some other marginal groups. Former (1990s) official social policy documents (Poverty reduction in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, 2000) fail to even mention such group as the homeless. The chapter on Estonia at least mentions the marginal groups whereas the analysis of the other two Baltic States fails to do that. . In the first social inclusion action plans composed after the accession of the Baltic States to the EU (Latvian National Action Plan for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (2004-2006), National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2004-2006 of the Republic of Lithuania, Estonian National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004-2006) homelessness as a problem has been mentioned in one or another way (Homeless people are one of the most vulnerable groups whose appearance is related to the consequences of rapid economic changes, NAP 2004-2006 Latvia etc).

14. After the accession of the Baltic States to the EU in 2004, a rapid economic growth started in them. Unemployment abruptly decreased (unemployment rate in 2006 in Lithuania was 5,6%, Estonia – 5,9%, Latvia – 6,8, EUROSTAT). As a result, the attitude towards unemployment and homelessness as a problem changed considerably. Joint Memorandum on the Social Inclusion (2003). National Action Plan on the Social Inclusion of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 2004-2006 mentioned homeless persons as a group at risk of social exclusion. Policy on Social Risk groups of population nominated several categories of persons at risk of social exclusion: pre-retirement age unemployed, young unemployed, ex-prisoners, long-term unemployed, etc. However, there are no visible state policy improvements in any country during 2005-2006 that emphasize the need to assist these categories of population. The problem of homelessness is clearly handled as an individual,

not a structural problem. In the case of homeless, it has also referred that they have the indications of homeless-culture (Dobelniece, 2007). The NAP Social Exclusion ... 2006-2008 and 2008-2010 of all 3 countries, are less focused on the general poverty and the different forms of it, including homelessness. According to some conclusion (Cunška, Muravská, 2009) “the EU approach to social inclusion does not consist in assisting the poor, but in helping them out of poverty by ensuring their participation in the innovative economic activities. This is not totally wrong, albeit too simplistic view on the EU social inclusion politics.

15. Social protection costs from the GDP in the year 2000 decreased in the Baltic States and the amenities of rapidly expanding economy may not result in the person’s dependence on the social security and social welfare *de facto* (Figure)

Figure 4. Total expenditure on social protection (EUROSTAT, 2006)



Source: EUROSTAT

16. Generally the problem of homelessness has been recognised as a serious problem in mid 90s. According to the expert opinions and indirect data (the numbers of shelter clients), the number of the homeless has stabilized in Estonia and Lithuania; in Latvia the number still grows. (Kõre, Kiik, Kõiv (2006), Dobelniece (2007), Karpuskiene, (2003)).

Table 6. The number of homeless

	The number of homeless by 2000/2001 census	The number of homeless in 2005 (ETHOS category housless)	Homeless people per one thousand inhabitants (2005)
Estonia	350	1460 <sup>1</sup>	1,1
Latvia	.....	3070 <sup>2</sup>	1,3
Lithuania	1250	2000 <sup>3</sup>	0,6

ETHOS – European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

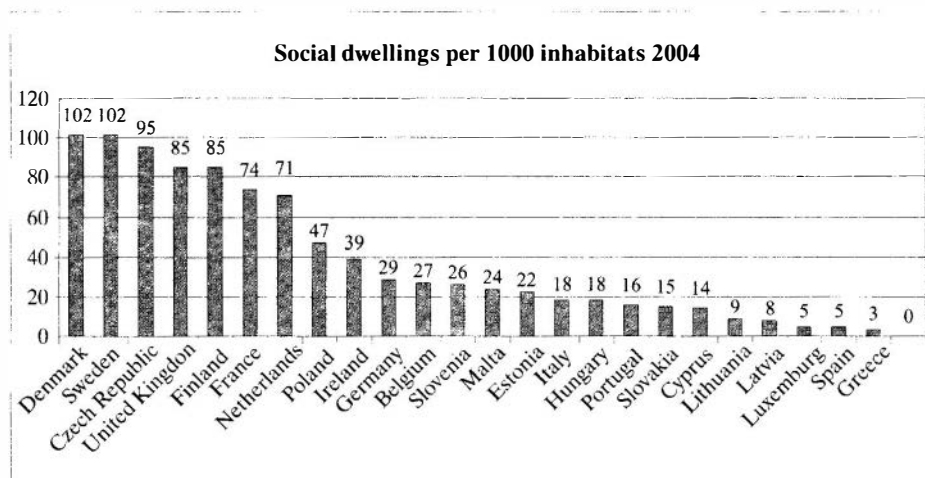
Source: <sup>1</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia; <sup>2</sup> Dobelniece, 2007; <sup>3</sup> Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania

According to the data presented in Table 4, the Baltic States belong to the states with average homeless rates. It should be taken into account that the data presented in the Table is the number of registered homeless (the persons using social services). This number is only one third or even smaller proportion of the whole group. In essence, the Baltic States have a rather high homeless rate and homelessness would need more attention in the national welfare politics (as much as in



Germany, France and the UK). As for methods and approaches, the national politics cannot be similar, due to the resources available (finances, social dwellings etc).

Figure 5. Number of social dwellings per 1000 inhabitants



Source: *First colloquium "Current developments in housing policies and housing markets in Europe...2006*

17. Estonian and Latvian legislation (The Estonian Social Welfare Act (1995), and Latvian Law on Social Services and Social Assistance (2002) fails to give the definition of “homelessness” or “poverty”. The official level of the risk of poverty or the poverty line is not set. Therefore the definitions of the European Commission are used in cases dealing with poverty, social exclusion and social inclusion in Estonia or Latvia. According to the European Commission, a person is considered poor if his/her income and resources (economic, social and cultural) are so scarce that his/her standard of living is lower than is socially acceptable and the person has limited or no access to the basic rights. Article 4 of the Lithuanian Law on Social Services (1996) lists 11 cases, in which provision of social benefits is compulsory (including 1. poverty, 3. homelessness). Therefore, it may be said that in the Lithuanian Law more attention is devoted to the extreme forms of social exclusion. Nevertheless, if national or international reports on social development are analysed (Social Sector in figures 2006. 2006. Tallinn; Social Report for 2006. 2007. Riga; The Social Report 2005-2006. 2006. Vilnius, The Social Report 2007-2008, 2008, Vilnius), very little information on the work with the homeless, drug-addicts, ex-prisoners, victims of violence and other risk-groups can be obtained.

Scientists use various definitions of homelessness (“The homeless are the persons who do not possess their own or rented accommodation, who do not live in any permanent lodging situation and who are referred to the temporary residential alternatives or who sleep outdoors” (Kõre, Kiik, Kõiv, 2006 in Estonia), or “Homeless people are the individuals who have no adequate accommodation – they live in the street, find a shelter in a temporary accommodation (in a night shelter, with friends etc.), or live in the buildings inappropriate for housing (dilapidated buildings, buildings subject to pulling down, sheds, attics, basements, staircase landings etc. (Dobelniece, 2007 in Latvia)”).

18. An average person does not consider homelessness to be a significant social problem. Ordinary citizens consider homelessness to be a problem in three situations:

- 1) For practical, everyday considerations (the homeless cause them some inconvenience or damage);

- 2) For organisational considerations (as tax payers the citizens find that the elected and appointed persons fail to perform their duties , since the homeless – a clearly defined group – testify to the existence of serious problems);
- 3) For humane considerations (all people enjoy the right to satisfy certain basic needs, such as the need for food, clothing & housing).

The most widely accepted theory, explaining homelessness in Europe is the marginalization theory, which divides the reasons leading to it into two large groups:

1) Reasons arising from the individual and 2) structural reasons related to the distribution of social resources (Swärd, 2003). Social workers list structural rather than individual factors as the reasons for homelessness.

Influenced by the liberal worldview Estonian and Latvian politicians are largely partial to the American theory of *poverty as the culture* and the theory of *homelessness as the culture*. (Kõre, 2003; Dobelniece 2007)

19. The information related to the reasons of homelessness was gathered in two ways: 1. Interviewing homeless people; 2) Interviews with officials, with directors of shelters and with social workers (experts).

In both cases similar reasons for homelessness were pointed out. The most common factors in the chains of events leading to homelessness are unemployment (structural factors), and alcohol abuse (individual factors). Loss of employment, resulting from alcohol abuse, rent debts and loss of a dwelling place are the dominant reasons for homelessness. The third most common chain of events is alcoholism resulting from unemployment , falling apart of the family and loss of a dwelling place.

20. In the opinion of some professionals (Paavel, 2003) in the present situation it is purposeless to develop a highly sophisticated system for the rehabilitation of the homeless.

In Paavel's opinion, the homeless can be divided into four different groups:

- Those who are able to be rehabilitated – persons, who can be reintegrated into the society after professionals' intervention;
- Those who are likely to be rehabilitated – persons, who are likely to be reintegrated into the society after professional's intervention;
- The ones who are not likely to be rehabilitated – persons, who are unlikely to be reintegrated into the society
- The ones who can not be rehabilitated – persons, who are unable to be reintegrated into the society

The number of persons who belong to the last two groups is relatively bigger. One of the reasons that can be given is the fact that homeless have been left too long without the support of the society.

21. One important service provider for the homeless in three countries is the non-profit sector (*diakonie*, the salvation army, other service providers). The role of the non-profit sector in the Baltic States has not yet been fully developed, the financing is insecure, but most of the workers in the given sector are highly motivated and good professionals . The public sector's work with the homeless can be characterized as the service oriented (service providing or service organising), whereas private sector's work is oriented to the client (solving clients' problems).

The difference between the orientations of both sectors is described by the opinions of the representatives of different sectors in the cases of the rehabilitation of their client groups. The representatives of the private sectors (MTÜ Tulevik, town of Pärnu, Estonia) are more optimistic compared to the representatives of the public sector (Tallinn city social-housing unit, Estonia). Indirectly, the difference shows the abilities of different structures to act in the field.

**Table 7. The rate of the rehabilitation of the clients (the percentage of clients, whose lifestyle in the opinion of experts can be changed.)**

	Tallinna Sotsiaalmajutusüksus (Tallinn City Social housing unit, Estonia)	MTÜ Tulevik, Pärnu (NGO Future, City of Pärnu, Estonia)
Night shelter	5%	20%
Rehabilitation centre	45%	-
Temporary housing	80%	100%

Source: authors' research

22. Client's contentment with the services, including the activities of socialworkers, depends on many factors. Some differences in contentment are objective and do not depend on the efforts of the social worker. The chart's data shows that contentment with the institutional care (IC) is lower than that with home care or open care (OC), irrespective of the target group (healthcare, service for the elderly, children, homeless). But higher contentment is a prerequisite for the successful social work, including the re-socialization of the homeless. The most widely spread service provided to the homeless in the Baltic States is the night shelter although it is not the best foundation for the re-socialization of the homeless.

**Table 8. Contentment with the service (Estonia, 2006)**

Social service	Subjective contentment with the service (max 4.0)
Long term care (IC)	3,28
Home nursing (OC)	3,91
Elderly home (IC)	3,21
Home care (OC)	3,84
Children's shelter (IC)	3,5
Children's day care centre (OC)	3,88
Homeless night shelter (IC)	3,20
Rehabilitation centre for long term unemployed and homeless people (OC)	3,58

Source: authors' research

23. NGOs have proved their capability to rehabilitate the homeless. Meanwhile, financial and administrative barriers limit their activity. To reach the next level in the development, it is important 1) to widen the (social) rights of the homeless (above all the right for healthcare services), or 2) to increase the opportunities (better funding) and rights to decide for the service providers (NGOs).

24. Only in Lithuania the general tendency is to increase leasehold. The housing strategy in Lithuania till 2020 provides for the increase of the leasehold from 10% to 18 %, including social housing from 2,4% to 4-5%. This tendency widens the possibilities of the Lithuanian social workers to solve housing problems. So it may be said that there are changes in the housing and homeless policy in 2000 in comparison with 1990 in Lithuania. Certainly, such rapid changes may not be observed in Estonia and Latvia. Therefore, using the example of homelessness as a social problem, we can state that the European Union policy to improve social inclusion can be effective, if it is in line with the national policy-making process.

What can be done to improve the work with the homeless in the Baltic States already today?

- The attitude towards homelessness as a problem should be more clearly formulated on the political and administrative (ministerial) level. National action plans of social inclusion of 2004-2006, 2006-2008, 2008-2010 handle homelessness only in passing and fail to mention the possible solutions.

- To expand the work in the streets. To use the experience gained from the voluntary work with the street children to help the adult homeless. To find contact with the dissociated homeless and offer them services provided today (shelter, soup kitchen and medical aid).

- A system of transitory homes (a intervening variant between shelter and social dwelling) should be developed.

- To include former homeless into the housing programs and provision of other services. The former members of target groups (prisoners, drug-addicts) are frequently used in rehabilitation programs. They are best as providers of information, can see the hardships, which may occur in the process and are positive role models for the others. They show that problems can be solved, are a good example and source of inspiration.

- People should admit that homeless are not hopeless and useless (although complicated) target group for social work and render them the same social services, which other target groups (children and youngsters, people with disabilities) receive. More important is to teach them management skills, bureaucratic procedure and how to make a budget. Analogical skills (how to fulfill one's financial obligation and reasonably use one's income) are an example taught in youngster homes to the former orphans.

- To offer homeless more work opportunities. It is important to concentrate on the restoration of their habit to work, provide retraining and to support job-search. It is necessary that local governments and voluntary organisations should organise the working opportunities and should not rely on the private sector.

- To help the homeless to find lodgings and support tenants in a more flexible way (shelter allowance etc.). Surely it is necessary to calculate, which of them is cheaper- to continue the present practice of relinquishing the rent arrears of the tenants or support the tenants who live in private dwellings.

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Īteikta 2009 m. rugpjūčio 15 d.