

In relation to the questions requested by UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right on adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, the Croatian Authorities wish to inform the following:

1. How those who are homeless and other stakeholders have been included in the design and implementation of housing strategies?

Homeless persons:

The Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette 157/13, 152/14, 99/15 and 52/16) prescribes for the right of homeless persons to accommodation in emergency situations, the competence for providing services for homeless persons, the obligation to cooperate with the competent social welfare centres, it describes the types of social services, while the conditions for their provision are specified in the Ordinance on minimum conditions for the provision of social services (Official Gazette 40/14 and 66/15).

Pursuant to the Social Welfare Act, a homeless person is a person who does not have a place to live, who stays on public or other place not intended for residence and does not have means to meet his or her need for residence (Official Gazette 157/13, 152/14, 99 / 15, and 52/16).

The Social Welfare Act stipulates the right of homeless persons to temporary accommodation in emergency situations, but the realization of this right depends on the big cities and county seats that are obliged to secure funds from their budget for the provision of services of accommodation in shelters or overnight shelters, food service in soup-kitchens and other forms of material assistance, support and services for citizens in need. The Act also prescribes the subsidiary jurisdiction of counties for these forms of care in situations where cities cannot provide the funds needed for these services independently, however, the existing services directed at homeless people are unevenly developed in different cities throughout Croatia, while in some cities there are none, and the need certainly exists. According to the data from the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, as of December 31, 2015, 391 homeless persons were registered in the Republic of Croatia, which does not represent the actual number of homeless people. Estimates suggest that there are at least as many people on the street that have no accommodation, and that several thousands of Croatian citizens are staying in inadequate conditions such as boats, caravans, without electricity and water, in basement apartments and garages.

An analysis of the available data from the Ministry regarding homeless persons (a total of 391 homeless persons) indicates the following:

- Out of the total number of homeless persons, 332 are male and 73 are female; 380 are citizens of the Republic of Croatia and 11 are foreigners;
- Marital status and family data are quite complex, 17 persons are married; 204 persons are unmarried; 16 persons are in the extramarital union; 109 persons are divorced; while homeless persons have 45 children;
- Data on the mental and physical condition of the homeless persons indicate that 110 persons have addiction problems, 96 persons have mental disabilities and 5 persons have no working abilities;
- The causes that led to homelessness are different - 17 persons were evicted, 27 have unresolved property and legal relations, 44 have unresolved housing issues after leaving the institution (social welfare institutions, penal institutions, etc.);
- The age of homeless persons ranges from 15 to 84 years of age. Thus, there are 5 homeless persons at the age of 15 - 19, and only one person is older than 80 years of age. Most of the

homeless men, 159 of them, are between the ages of 50 and 64, while most homeless women, 45 of them, are between the ages of 45-59;

- Of the total number of homeless persons, 253 of them use accommodation services in a shelter or overnight shelter, while three persons use the half-day stay service;
- Data on income of homeless persons indicate that 318 homeless persons have no income; 25 are without income, but are waiting for pension; while 48 of them have insufficient income to meet their needs for housing, due to foreclosure or some other reason;
- Out of the total number of homeless persons, 382 persons are entitled to the rights in the social welfare system
 - 139 persons are beneficiaries of the guaranteed minimum benefit, 3 persons are beneficiaries of the personal disability allowance, 33 are beneficiaries of allowance for assistance and care, 3 persons are beneficiaries of the jobseeker's allowance, 204 people are beneficiaries of one-off assistance;
 - Only 58 homeless persons exercise rights to benefits and grants from the funds of local and/or regional self-government units;
 - A greater number of homeless persons, 216 of them, are beneficiaries of the soup-kitchen;
 - Some of the homeless persons, 25 of them, are persons with disabilities;
 - Data on the working status of the homeless persons show that only one person is employed, while 365 are unemployed and 25 are retired.

Among the unemployed there are 94 persons incapable of work, and 271 persons capable of work.

The qualification or educational structure of the unemployed homeless persons who are capable of work is as follows: there are 72 Unskilled Workers, 50 semi-skilled workers, 36 have elementary school education, 45 are qualified workers, 3 are highly qualified workers, 60 have secondary school education, and 1 person has professional graduate study education, while 4 persons have higher education.

In the Republic of Croatia there are a total of 14 shelters and overnight shelters for homeless persons and 1 whole-day stay accommodation in Dubrovnik, Karlovac, Kaštela, Osijek, Pula, Rijeka, Split, Šibenik, Varaždin, Zadar and Zagreb with accommodation capacity of about 430 people. The founders of the shelters are cities, associations, humanitarian and religious organizations.

It is important to emphasize that local and regional self-government units are obliged to provide funds for carrying out social welfare activities in accordance with the social plan and network of social services in their area and cooperate with relevant social welfare centers and service providers in order to prevent, mitigate and eliminate the causes of social exclusion of homeless persons. Nevertheless, many Croatian cities have not yet ensured funds for providing accommodation services in the overnight shelter or shelter, nor have they provided funds for the development of alternative forms of care for homeless persons. Also, among the cities that have developed services for the homeless persons, there is a disparity in the quality and content of services, but also in the scope of financing by local and/or regional self-government units. The lack of separate rooms for the accommodation and stay of homeless women in most shelters and overnight shelters is one of a number of problems related to providing adequate care for this population.

In cooperation with counties, large cities, municipalities and social welfare homes founded by the Republic of Croatia, in the past few years, the Ministry has developed a unified Plan for homeless persons during extreme winter conditions, which, in addition to the data received from local self-government units – larger cities, also contains data on the possibilities of providing temporary accommodation and other services for homeless persons in state owned social welfare homes. The plan is published on the Ministry's website and sent to all social

welfare institutions and large cities as guidelines for procedures in weather conditions that can be life-threatening for homeless persons without any kind of accommodation. It is obvious that the need for developing a Plan for homeless persons during extreme winter conditions derives from the underdeveloped network of services for homeless persons in the Republic of Croatia. Pursuant to the above, in 2014, the Ministry requested the appointment of a coordinator for the care of homeless persons in counties and major cities in order to address the problem of lack of developed forms of care for homeless persons in certain areas, as well as the need for stronger cooperation with competent bodies and service providers, and the need for standardization of quality of services in those cities where the services are present. Coordinators are also encouraged to use the available funding sources to develop services for homeless persons in their area of work through cooperation with non-governmental organizations in their area and local competent social welfare centers. Although there are positive shifts and every year the number of reported projects for homeless persons is increasing, there is a problem of insufficient withdrawal of funds for this category of beneficiaries. Regarding the aforementioned, civil society organizations emphasize the problem of scarce resources for the implementation of demanding projects such as those of the European Structural Funds. Apart from the same problem that exists in individual local and regional self-government units, there is also the fact of denying the problem of homeless persons in a particular area. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that homeless persons, due to the lack of developed forms of care in a given area, often go to other cities that have developed services that simplify their everyday life. From the position of those cities and organizations who care about homeless persons in their area, such situations are not desirable because they place them in a moral (but not legal) obligation to help the homeless persons and thus create a financial obligation for helping a beneficiary who does not reside in their area. In addition to the above mentioned problem, one should not ignore the fact that there is a significant number of so called hidden homeless persons who are not on the street, but live in undignified conditions. Concerning the abovementioned, there is a clear need for greater involvement of local and/or regional self-government units in undertaking measures for developing appropriate forms of care for homeless persons in their area.

When it comes to appropriate forms of care, it is important to point out that, apart from the usual accommodation services in shelters and overnight shelters, Croatia started developing a model of residential communities for homeless persons, which has proved to be a much more efficient and humane model of care, especially for young people who can re-socialize more easily in this manner.

On the other hand, the latest approach to care for homeless persons at European level refers to the so-called "housing first" model, which implies an alternative to the care of homeless persons in shelters/overnight shelters. Instead of first getting the homeless person away from the street to the shelter/overnight shelter and then moving the person through different forms of housing, out of which each level is closer to an independent accommodation (e.g. from the street to a shelter, from a shelter to a transitional accommodation program and from that program to the apartment in the community, the so-called step-by-step model of care), within the "housing first" model the homeless person is placed directly from the street to the apartment for which the rent is paid, but at the same time he is provided with professional assistance and support to re-socialize as soon as possible which includes employment after which he will be able to pay the rent for the apartment. This approach is based on the idea that homeless people should first be provided with safe housing so that they can resolve other issues related to their status.

Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020 prescribes the measures and activities which are set up to stimulate the development of specific services aimed at housing homeless persons, that is, improving the care of homeless persons as a whole.

Therefore, one of the main strategic activities in the strategic area 4.3. Housing and availability of energy, is the activity of establishment of and support to shelter and emergency accommodation programmes through the implementation of programmes for the homeless persons, the asylum grantees and foreigners under subsidiary protection, human trafficking victims and victims of family violence; establishment of soup-kitchens; use of housing capacities owned by the Republic of Croatia for social welfare needs.

Area 4.4. Access to social benefits and services includes strategic activity 4. Improving the care system for homeless persons by encouraging coordination among stakeholders (LRSGU, CSOs, other competent authorities); by ensuring and improving services and programmes to encourage employment; by ensuring the availability of all necessary services, especially of health care and accommodation services (in addition to shelters and safe houses, ensuring more permanent accommodation for a self-sustained life through LRSGU); by providing support to programmes aimed at strengthening the homeless persons to lead a self-sustained life;

In addition to the abovementioned example, it is important to point out that the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy annually announces tenders and provides funds for programs for homeless persons aimed at reducing the social exclusion of homeless persons - secured funds of HRK 2,500,000.00.

Operational programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 European Social Fund: Expanding the Community Social Services Network - Phase III, aims to improve employment opportunities by supporting the development of effective and inclusive social services. This grant allocation program will support the projects which will continue developing social services for vulnerable groups in local communities: persons with disabilities, former addicts, homeless persons, victims of domestic violence, young people without adequate parental care, young people with behavioral disorders, asylum seekers, asylum grantees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in order to improve their employment opportunities. Also, the projects that will be supported are the ones that focus on family members who care for a dependent member (such as elderly and disabled persons, people with disabilities, children), with the aim of reconciling their family and business life. The amount of HRK 33,127,000.00 is available for financing projects within the aforementioned call. Funding resources are provided from the funds of the European Social Fund and within the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the Ministry, in cooperation with all counties, large cities, municipalities, homes for the elderly and infirm, and homes for mentally ill adults which are founded by the Republic of Croatia, each year compiles a unified Housing plan for homeless persons during extreme winter conditions, which, along with information received from local self-government units - major cities, also contains data on the possibilities of providing temporary accommodation and other services for homeless persons in social welfare institutions founded by the Republic of Croatia.

For the purpose of providing housing for homeless persons in extreme weather conditions, in the autumn of each year the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy requests a report from all the cities in the Republic of Croatia regarding the plan for the care of homeless persons in the above mentioned weather conditions. The Ministry requires the same from the homes for the elderly and infirm founded by the Republic of Croatia as well as from the homes for adults founded by the Republic of Croatia. Article 117, paragraph 4 of the Social Welfare Act prescribes the obligation of large towns and cities of county headquarters to provide accommodation services in shelters and overnight shelters for homeless persons in the manner prescribed.

Persons with disabilities:

Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, 56/95, 135/97, 8/98, 113/00, 124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85 / 10 and 05/14) stipulates that the state devotes special care to the protection of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in social life.

The Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning has improved the legal framework for the purpose of ensuring the accessibility of buildings and the new Building Act (Official Gazette 153/13) and the Ordinance on accessibility of buildings for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility (Official Gazette,78/13) has been adopted. The Ministry of Construction shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Law and regulations passed on the basis of this Law, as well as the legality of the work and conduct of the administrative bodies of the units of local and regional self-government, legal persons with public authority, authorized persons, etc. Penalties are envisaged in all stages of construction and for all participants during the construction (investor, designer, contractor, supervising engineer and design auditor) in case the accessibility provisions are not applied. In the end, buildings that are not built in accordance with the accessibility provisions cannot get a use permit.

The building inspection monitors the construction of buildings and during the inspection checks the compliance of the works with the documentation (building permit, main project). If irregularities are found in relation to accessibility, the deadline for harmonization is given, and after the deadline financial penalties are imposed in accordance with the Instruction on financial penalties issued by construction inspectors in the implementation of the Building Inspection Act (Official Gazette 122/14).

During 2015, a total of 15 interventions in the process of issuing official acts were registered (out of a total of 10 234), out of which 8 were interventions in the process of issuing building acts and 7 were interventions in the process of issuing use permit for the construction work.

A person with disability who requires intensive care and fulfillment of other necessities of life during a longer period of time and when it is not possible to enable care in the family by providing adequate non-institutional forms of care, shall be provided with the right to long-term accommodation according to age, type and degree of disability. This right is governed by the Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette, 157/13, 152/14, 99/15 and 52/16).

Social services in the network are provided pursuant to professional and spatial standards and are regulated by the Ordinance on minimum conditions for the provision of social services (Official Gazette, 40/14 and 66/15), which, inter alia, establishes minimum conditions in terms of space and equipment that should be met when providing long-term accommodation services, and also apply to accessibility.

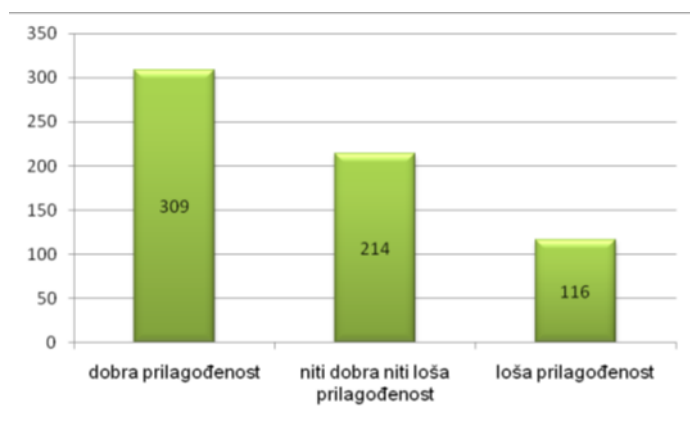
The Ordinance on quality standards of social services (Official Gazette, 143/14) prescribes quality standards of social services and guidelines for their introduction and criteria to determine compliance with quality standards of social services. The quality standards of social services encompass seventeen quality standards that apply to all social services, as well as accommodation services.

In 2009 the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, whose legal successor is the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, in cooperation with the University of Zagreb, Department of Social Work, conducted a study on the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Croatia. A total of 689 adult respondents participated in the quantitative part of the survey. According to the survey results, the housing situation of the respondents is more favorable and a lower percentage of the family of persons with disabilities are living as tenants.

When it comes to infrastructure, there is a big problem regarding obstacles in the environment. The apartments are somewhat adapted to people with disabilities, but the environment is not. The biggest problems are related to movement: stairs, elevated thresholds and narrow passages. There are problems with public transport. Most cities in Croatia do not have transport for people

with disabilities. If the transport exists, the problem is the inadequacy of public transport equipment: from high thresholds to seats. An analysis of the connection between income in the household and the exercise of rights has shown that persons with disabilities use their rights on the basis of disability, regardless of the financial circumstances in the household, if they are entitled to those rights and are better informed about these rights because most have said they are not using some rights just because they are not informed about the existence of such types of assistance. According to the size of the respondent's living space, 24 respondents (4.2%) live in a space of up to 30 m². 183 respondents (32.1%) live in a space of 31 to 60 m², while 151 respondents (26.5%) live in a space of 61 to 80 m². 125 respondents (21.9%) live in a space of 81 to 100 m². 87 respondents (15.3%) live in a space of over 100 m². Respondents were asked to assess the adaptability of the housing space to their needs.

Figure: Sample of respondents according to the social welfare center



The largest number of respondents (48.4%) believe that the living space is well adapted to their needs. A total of 33.5% of respondents believe that the living space is somewhat well-adapted, while 18.2% of respondents think the living space is poorly adapted. The result shows that only respondents older than 66 years in most cases estimate the adaptability of the living space as neither good nor bad (45.7%), while respondents in all other age groups estimate it to be mostly good. Only respondents between the ages of 56 and 65 estimate the adaptability to be equally good and neither good nor bad (40.7%). The result can be explained with view that older people have different and changing needs that should follow a series of changes in the life of a person, and so should the adaptation of the living space. Also, the perceived perception of living space adaptation is related to the type of disability that the respondents have. Certainly, a deaf person will perceive the environment as more adapted than the person with physical disabilities. The aforementioned research is available in Croatian on the website of the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy and is also available in a printed version.

Elderly persons whose accommodation expenses with service providers are fully or partially compensated by the state:

According to the Annual Statistical Report for 2016, on December 31, 2016 in the Republic of Croatia, a total of 2,557 persons were accommodated with social services providers for the elderly, whose accommodation expenses were fully or partially paid from the state budget. On the same day, according to the same source, 2027 elderly persons were accommodated in foster families.

Housing of execution debtors:

Housing of execution debtors is defined in the Act on Amendments to the Execution Act in Articles 131a, 131b, and 131c of the Official Gazette 73/17.

Article 131a

(1) An execution debtor who is obliged to move out of a real estate sold in the execution procedure, due to payment of monetary claims, shall be entitled to a financial compensation for the costs of housing care from the state budget funds if:

- he was residing in the real estate from which he is obliged to move out before the commencement of the execution procedure,
- he voluntarily handed the property to the buyer,
- he does not own another property for fulfilment of basic housing needs.

(2) The procedure for granting the right to financial compensation for housing care expenses shall be initiated at the request of the execution debtor to the competent social welfare center within 30 days from the date of delivery of the real estate to the buyer. With the request, the execution debtor is obliged to enclose a decision on the real estate execution procedure and evidence of a concluded rental contract for the real estate intended for housing.

(3) The social welfare center shall decide on the recognition of the right to financial compensation for the costs of housing care.

(4) The social welfare center is obliged to immediately notify the court that issued the execution order on the submission of application for recognition of the right to financial compensation for the costs of housing care. The court will deliver the resolution on the transfer of the real estate to the buyer to the social welfare center that provided the notification.

(5) If the execution debtor filed a request from paragraph 2 of this Article after the court has issued a decision on the award of the real estate, and before the decision on the award of the real estate has been finalized and before the buyer has placed the purchase, the court that received the notice from paragraph 4 of this Article from the competent social welfare center will submit the conclusion on the transfer of the real estate to the buyer after the expiration of 30 days from the day when the conditions for reaching a conclusion regarding the transfer of the real estate to the buyer are met.

(6) The right to financial compensation for housing costs is recognized from the day of delivery of the real estate to the buyer, it is paid monthly and is recognized for a maximum of 18 months.

(7) The amount of financial compensation for housing costs amounts to a maximum of 500% of the basis on which the amount of other rights under the social care regulations is calculated and is recognized in the amount of the agreed rent.

(8) Appeals against the decision of the social welfare center, which decides on the right to a financial compensation for housing costs, shall be decided by the Ministry responsible for social welfare activities.

(9) The appeal referred to in paragraph 8 of this Article shall not postpone the execution of the decision.

Article 131.b

(1) A beneficiary who was granted financial compensation for housing costs is obliged to report to the social welfare center, without delay, any change which affects further use or the amount of the monetary compensation, but not later than eight days from the day of the change.

(2) If the beneficiary, after the change of circumstances, still fulfills conditions for use of the right to a financial compensation for housing costs, in smaller or greater amount than already granted, the right to the changed amount shall be granted on the day of the change of the circumstances.

(3) If, due to changed circumstances, the beneficiary fails to fulfil the conditions for further use of the right to a financial compensation for housing costs, the right shall be revoked on the day of the change of circumstances.

Article 131.c

In exceptional cases, if the execution debtor referred to in Article 131.a and a person that the execution debtor is obliged by law to support, and who resided in the real estate from which the execution debtor is obligated to move out before the enforcement of the execution procedure, cannot meet the housing needs by granting the right referred to in Article 131a paragraph 1 of this Act, he may exercise the right to temporary accommodation service in emergency situations.

Provision of accommodation for victims of family violence in shelters – financing through social contracting:

This financing model implies the payment of the costs of temporary accommodation for victims of family violence who are entitled to the service granted by a decision from the social welfare centre. The right to a temporary accommodation service may be recognized only for those service providers who concluded a social service contract with the Ministry and who have previously reached a decision on meeting the minimum conditions for the provision of social services in accordance with the Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette 157/13 152/14, 99/15, 52/16 and 16/17) and subordinate bylaws.

Temporary accommodation service is standardized (Ordinance on minimum conditions for the provision of social services, Official Gazette 40/14 and 66/15) therefore beneficiaries are, in addition to housing and nutrition, also provided with social assistance and support, psychosocial treatment and support in performing daily activities.

Included in the contracted monthly price is 100.00 HRK that beneficiaries receive for personal needs. In this way, 10 service providers are continually funded, with the total contracted accommodation capacity for 141 place.

The funds are paid according to the service performed (according to the actual presence of the beneficiary on a daily basis) and according to the available data, the Ministry for this purpose in 2016 (12 months) approved the funds in the total amount of 4,150,382.09 HRK and in 2017 (8 months) an amount of 2,439,631.03 HRK, wherein it is necessary to pay funds by the end of the year for another 4 months.

Also, an average of 105 beneficiaries use the service of accommodation in shelters monthly.

Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020 prescribes measures and activities whose aim is to stimulate the development of specific services focused at housing care for the vulnerable population. Designated competent authority for Strategic Area 3: Housing and availability of energy is the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning. During 2016, improvement has been made in the leased housing system in the Republic of Croatia - a total of 453 housing units in 2016.

With a view to protecting the socially vulnerable consumers, from January 1, 2016, a new Regulation on the monthly amount of compensation for the endangered energy buyers is applied. According to the available statistical data for the period from January 1 until December 31, 2016, 63 571 beneficiaries were registered as endangered energy buyers.

Administrative Supervision Department continued with the implementation of the administrative supervision of the local self-government units in the procedures for recognizing the right to compensation for housing costs. The supervision was carried out by reviewing the social welfare decisions of the local self-government units, and by reviewing the subject of administrative proceedings in which the matter was decided. Among other things, it was established that local self-government units in which supervision has been conducted generally recognize the right to compensation for housing costs, but in scope and amount less than the one prescribed in the Social Welfare Act, and in most cases stating the lack of budget funds as the reason. The reports on the conducted administrative supervisions emphasize the established illegalities and specify the measures for their removal, and the local self-government units shall,

within the prescribed deadline, submit the statements regarding the measures taken to the Administrative Supervision Department.

In 2016, the Ministry of the Croatian War Veterans resolved the question of housing for 129 Homeland War victims, 38 of which received a flat with a right to repurchase and 91 received a flat through a housing loan. The Ministry also continues to carry out organized housing development but is also taking over the flats from other state bodies in order to resolve the housing problem for the Homeland War victims as quickly and efficiently as possible.

<p>2.3. Strategic area: Housing and availability of energy <i>Designated competent authority : Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning</i></p>
<p>Main strategic activity: 2.3.1. Improving the leased housing system</p>
<p>Measure 1: Adoption of programmes for the creation of leased housing models</p>
<p>a) activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since 2015 the leased housing system in the Republic of Croatia has been improved by the adoption of the <i>Amendments to the Publicly Subsidized Residential Construction Act</i>¹ and <i>Rules on leases within the POS programme</i>² <p>b) Monitoring method/indicator:</p> <p>Implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During 2016, public calls for lease of apartments from POS programme were published on several locations lokacija (Zagreb, Osijek, Bjelovar, Ogulin, Zadar) - According to the APN Report from 2016, 453 apartments were leased
<p>Owner/co-owner: Owner of measure: Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning (MCP) Co-owner: Agency for Transactions and Mediation in Immovable Properties, Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy and local self-government units</p>
<p>Target groups/beneficiaries: socially vulnerable and vulnerable groups at risk of poverty</p>
<p>Source of financing/co-financing: State budget: MCP regular activities</p>
<p>Status evaluation: The implementation of the activities started in 2015 by adopting the legal framework of the Amendments to the Publicly Subsidized Residential Construction Act and the Rules on leases within the POS programme, on the basis of which public calls for rental of POS apartments were announced. In the reporting period for 2016, an increase in the number of leased apartments was recorded on December 31, 2016, a total of 453 residential units.</p>
<p>Recommendations for the following period: The aforementioned progress during 2016 is reflected in the increase in the number of leased apartments within the POS program, which is also an indicator of a more favorable way of solving the housing issue. Depending on further POS-related activities, there is a possibility to further improve the leased housing system.</p>
<p>Main strategic activity:</p>

¹ Amendments to the Publicly Subsidized Residential Construction Act (OG, 26/15)

² Rules on leases within the POS programme (OG, 57/15)

2.3.2. Establishment of and support to shelter and emergency accommodation programmes, and establishment of soup-kitchens; use of housing capacities owned by the Republic of Croatia for social welfare needs and 2.3.5. Establishment and provision of space and support to housing community programs

Measure 1: Use of housing capacities owned by the Republic of Croatia for social welfare needs by developing a plan for the usage of real estate for the housing care for socially vulnerable groups

a) Activity:

- Drafting the housing demand needs plan in accordance with the deinstitutionalisation and transformation of social welfare homes and in accordance with county social plans.

b) Monitoring method:

- Monitoring the implementation of a real estate property utilization contract

Implemented:

- In year 2016 there were no activities related to the implementation of this measure.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: MDFYSP

Co-owner: State Office for State Property Management (SOSPM), counties, cities, non-governmental organizations, humanitarian organizations and religious communities.

Target groups/beneficiaries: homeless persons

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget: MDFYSP regular activities

Status evaluation:

- In year 2016 there were no activities related to the implementation of this measure.

Recommendations for the following period: /

Measure 2: Provision of material support for shelter programs and necessary accommodation

a) Activity:

- Determining the required number of housing units and their location for the purpose of asylum seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection accommodation to be sought from State Office for State Property Management (SOSPM).

- The planned dynamics is 5 residential units per year between 2014 and 2020 on the basis of a Real Property Assistance Contract.

b) Monitoring method:

- The implementation of this measure is monitored over the number of housing units taken over from SOSPM

Indicator:

- Number of acquired housing units from SOSPM for use

Implemented:

- As during 2015, MDFYSP, in spite of the plans to demand additional housing for asylum seekers and foreigners under subsidiary protection from SOSPM did not do so because of the problems surrounding the layout of flats obtained for this purpose in earlier years.

- The state apartments that SOSPM gave to MDFYSP for this purpose are in a very bad condition and need to be fully rehabilitated. Although the MDFYSP has regulated the adaptation and rehabilitation of properties to SWC in whose jurisdiction area the flats are located, the part related to the operational approvals is still underway. Out of 10 apartments obtained in previous years for this purpose, three apartments are still in the adaptation process, while one is occupied by an illegal resident.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: MDFYSP

Co-owner: Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

Target groups/beneficiaries: persons granted international protection (asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection)

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget: MDFYSP regular activities

Status evaluation:

The measure was not implemented in 2016. However, during 2016, MDFYSP has been financing programs and projects aimed at reducing and preventing social exclusion, as well as social inclusion and integration of socially vulnerable groups, including those who were granted international protection, into the life of communities. Funding of 3 projects was approved related to the promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation in the area of integration of persons with approved international protection, encouraging the integration of persons under international protection through the development of craftsmanship for micro-enterprises and assistance to asylum grantees in seeking jobs.

Recommendations for the following period:

Measure should be redefined as the Action Plan for the Integration of Persons with Approved International Protection defines all measures for these persons. The purpose of this measure needs to be considered.

Main strategic activity:**2.3.3. Effective energy management in the construction sector*****Measure 1: Provision of social protection measures for consumers, particularly socially vulnerable consumers, in line with sustainable and open energy markets, in order to reduce poverty*****a) Activity:**

- Adopting the new Regulation on the monthly amount of vulnerable energy buyer benefit,
- Ensuring further implementation of support through the monthly benefit for vulnerable energy buyer prescribed by the Social Welfare Act.

The available data indicate that the cost of heat and electricity is the largest household expenditure, and households that cannot settle expenditures become energy-poor, and therefore, with the aim of reducing poverty, the changes to the legislative framework are made. In September 2015, based on art. 34 of the Energy Act, the Regulation on the Criteria for Acquiring the Status of Vulnerable Energy Buyer from Cross-Border Systems was adopted, by which the criteria for obtaining the status of a vulnerable energy buyer in energy network were established, as well as the means of raising funds in order to reduce the energy poverty of vulnerable energy buyers through social support.

Through said Regulation a solidarity fee was introduced, payable for all electricity household customers for the purpose of accumulating funds for the payment of benefit for the supply of energy to vulnerable energy buyers (the amount of solidarity fee amounts to 0.03 HRK for each kWh of electricity consumed). In addition, in order to implement the measure of protection of socially vulnerable energy buyers in September 2015, the Law on Amendments to the Social Welfare Act "benefit for the vulnerable energy buyer" was introduced, by which a single person or a household fulfil the criteria for obtaining the status of the vulnerable energy buyer as prescribed by regulations regulating the energy sector. The Regulation on the monthly benefit for vulnerable energy buyer is applicable from January 1, 2016. The fee for the vulnerable energy buyer is determined in the amount of up to 200,00 HRK per month

b) Monitoring method:

- Statistical and financial reports.

Implemented:

- The new Regulation on the monthly amount of vulnerable energy buyer benefit adopted, applied since January 1, 2016.
- In the period from January 1 to December 2016, a total of 63,571 beneficiaries were registered for vulnerable energy buyer benefit.

- Further implementation is provided for supporting the vulnerable population that is unable to settle the cost of electricity (GMB beneficiaries, beneficiaries of personal disability allowance) through vulnerable energy buyer benefit.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: MDFYSP

Co-owner: Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (CERA), entities in energy area, Financial Agency (FINA), SWC

Target groups/beneficiaries: vulnerable categories of population unable to settle the cost of electricity (GMB beneficiaries, beneficiaries of personal disability allowance who are not members of the GMB beneficiary household).

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget:

Planned:

The benefit for the vulnerable energy buyer is financed from the State budget through a solidary fee. The funds collected for the purpose of financing the benefit are in the position of MDFYSP A799009.

Disbursed:

According to available MDFYSP data for the period January 1, 2016 until December 31, 2016. 63 571 beneficiaries have been registered for compensation for the vulnerable energy buyer and the total amount disbursed for the stated period is 126.604.106,50 kn.

Status evaluation:

Legislative and implementing regulations for the implementation are adopted in 2015 and thus provide conditions for further continuous implementation of the measure.

Recommendations for the following period:

Further continuous implementation and monitoring of the measure, assessment of the state by analysing the resources spent and obtained, and an assessment of the possibility of extending the criteria for acquiring the status of vulnerable energy buyers and other beneficiaries.

Main strategic activity:

2.3.4. Improvement of housing standard of vulnerable groups

Measure 1: Improvement of housing standard of other vulnerable groups by ensuring that housing costs are settled

a) Activity:

- Establish supervision and statistical monitoring of the rights within ULRSG jurisdiction to reduce poverty and social exclusion by settling housing costs,
- Implement administrative supervision to supervise the legality of ULRSG work on the application of the Social Welfare Act provisions relating to the right to housing benefit and fuel allowance.

b) Monitoring method:

- Through conducted administrative supervisions in ULRSG, the legality of the work on the application of the provisions of the Social Welfare Act concerning the right to housing benefit and fuel allowance.
- Statistical Reports.

Implemented:

- In 2016, an administrative supervision of the lawfulness of the work of 36 LSGU was conducted concerning the procedures for recognizing the right to housing benefit (28 cities and 8 municipalities).

Indicator:

- number of cities and municipalities providing funds: . /.
- number of counties providing funds: 21

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: MDFYSP

Co-owners: LSGU and ULRSG, SWC

<p>Target groups/beneficiaries: GMB beneficiaries</p>
<p>Source of financing/co-financing: <i>State budget:</i> MDFYSP regular activities Disbursed: within MDFYSP regular activities for administrative supervision <i>Other sources:</i> LSGU and ULRSG budget</p>
<p>Status evaluation (clarification): The MDFYSP's Administrative Control Department continuously conducts administrative supervision of the LSGU in the procedures for recognizing the right to a housing benefit. The supervision was carried out by reviewing the Social Welfare Decision issued by LSGU, and by reviewing the subject of administrative proceedings in which the matter was decided. Supervisions have established that a number of LSGU have not yet brought the Social Welfare Decision, or the rights from the social welfare system have been regulated by the ordinance or there has been a Social Welfare Decision but the same has not been aligned with the Social Welfare Act. Furthermore, the supervisions have established that the LSGU in which supervision was conducted generally recognized the right to housing benefit, but in a scope and amount less than the one prescribed by the Social Welfare Act, usually stating a lack of budget funds as a reason. Supervision also revealed the omissions in the application of the <i>General Administrative Procedure Act</i> and the Office Administration Ordinance. The reports on the performed administrative supervision emphasizes the established irregularities and measures for their removal are proclaimed. Within proscribed deadline, LSGU submits to the Department of Administrative Supervision statement on the measures taken. Beginning of the administrative supervision of the right to housing benefit, the LSGU awareness is affected, tied to the fact that they are obliged to primarily provide in their budgets financial means for those obligations under the Social Welfare Act and to also that they have freedom to pursue their social policy independently, according to the needs of the population in their area. The conducted control supervisions established that LSGU acted on the previously ordered measures.</p>
<p>Recommendations for the following period: Considering that Local self-government units (LSGU) are independent in their work, it is necessary for the Social Welfare Act to further detail the obligations imposed to LSGU by the Act, as well as the way in which MDFYSP oversees the legality of their work and sanctions for violations of the provisions of the Act. Given the previously established non-use of the right due to the lack of information, the social welfare centres (SWC) are alerted to the obligation to inform the Guaranteed minimum benefit (GMB) beneficiaries to address the LSGU for the purpose of exercising the right to housing costs, and also such information are provided to beneficiaries when addressing various inquiries/petitions to the Ministry.</p>
<p>Measure 2: Elimination of Segregation and Providing Housing Conditions for All Citizens Using the Principle of Non-Discrimination</p>
<p>a) Activity: - establishment of a working group and development of guidelines for ensuring equal access to housing, focusing on vulnerable groups and elimination of segregation.</p> <p>b) Monitoring method /indicator: - competent bodies reports: MDFYSP, CSORHC, MSP, ULRSG - developed guidelines for ensuring equal access to housing for vulnerable groups</p> <p>Implemented: - The OHRRNM has distributed to all stakeholders the European Commission Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in Education and Spatial Segregation and on the same document informed the OP Steering Boards in which they participated (Operational Programme Efficient Human Resource and Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion).</p>

- Pursuant to the Croatian Government's Program for the 2016-2020 term expressing the readiness of the GoC to continue with the improvement of the existing level of protection of the national minorities rights, the GoC has, on its session held on November 24, 2016 issued a *Decision on the Development of National Minority Operational Programs*. In the mentioned *Decision* Mr. Zvonko Šakić, Assistant Minister of Finance, was appointed to prepare, in the cooperation with the OHRRNM and other competent state administration bodies (SAB), operational programs for national minorities, which will determine mechanisms for the protection of national minorities and support the activities of their bodies in accordance with the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and other special regulations.

Within the Draft Proposal of the National Minority Operational Program, within the framework of the program for the Roma national minority, the adoption of the Regulation on Roma minority Assistance was proposed, inter alia, which would establish models of Roma minority Assistance in the area of housing care, criteria for determining the beneficiaries and paths of enforcing the established rights for a particular assistance model. OHRRNM held several meetings with the competent government bodies, and certain doubts emerged regarding the normative framework for the regulation of the rights of members of a particular national minority, as well as the competences of the body for drafting the proposal of that regulation, and on which the Office requested expert opinions from the for Legislation and the Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA). For the sake of the alignment, the received opinions were forwarded by the Office to the Office of the Prime minister and to Ministry of Finance (MF).

- Also, OHRRNM is the competent body for coordinating the work of the Standing Committee for the integration of foreigners into the society in Republic of Croatia and the related Working Group, and in accordance with the Act on International and Temporary Protection, the Office coordinates the work of all ministries, non-governmental organizations and other bodies involved in the process of inclusion of asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in society. Consequently, in 2016, a Working Group of the Standing Committee for the integration of foreigners into society was established. That Working Group has developed the Draft Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Under International Protection for period 2017-2019, according to which the CSORHC and MSP will assume the obligation of accommodation and housing of persons under international protection on the basis of the deployment plan to be adopted by the Working Group Standing Committee for integration of foreigners.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities (OHRRNM)

Co-owners: Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP), Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care (CSORHC), Ministry for State Property (MSP), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning (MCP), Units of local and regional self-government (ULRS) and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) working in the area of protection and promotion of human rights.

Target groups/beneficiaries: employees of competent authorities and services at local, regional and national level who are working on the assignment of apartments to vulnerable groups/citizens, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups of citizens.

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget: disbursed within OHRRNM regular activities

Status evaluation:

Although specific activities have been undertaken, the living and housing conditions of vulnerable groups are not at an appropriate level, therefore, enhanced coordination of competent authorities at national and local level is needed to improve standards in this area.

Recommendations for the following period:

The Commission for drafting Housing Care Act in assisted areas was established within Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care (CSORHC). The Office for Human Rights and

Rights of National Minorities (OHRRNM) proposes not to establish a special Working Group for development of guidelines for ensuring equal access to housing, with emphasis on vulnerable groups and promoting the elimination of segregation, but to consider the possibility of developing these guidelines within the aforementioned Commission. The OHRRNM also proposes that, when revising this document, the main owner of Measure 2 becomes CSORHC as the central body responsible for housing care issues and that the OHRRNM, along with other bodies, becomes the co-owner for the implementation of this measure.

Measure 3: Implementation of goals of Architectural Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020, "Apolicy" (ApolitikA), the National Guidelines for Quality Building and Construction Culture

a) Activity:

- monitoring of implementation of Apolicy" (ApolitikA) document goals.

b) Monitoring method /indicator:

- data collected by the MCPP and the Work Report of the Working Group for monitoring the implementation of the objectives of the Architectural Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020, Apolicy" (ApolitikA), the National Guidelines for Quality Building and Construction Culture.

Implemented:

- The Working Group for monitoring the implementation of document Architectural Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020, "Apolicy" (ApolitikA), the National Guidelines for Quality Building and Construction Culture, in 2016 organized an information and educational module entitled "Apolicy" (ApolitikA) and Public Space Interventions - Accessibility" was held in City of Vinkovci. Within one of the topics discussed, an overview of the Implementation Report of the National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2007-2015 was provided, in terms of ensuring accessibility of buildings and spaces for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. This topic was complementary with "Housing" area as well as the availability of housing for vulnerable groups within the Architectural Policy document.

- The MCPP based on the "Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program in the Vukovar-Srijem County" continued to monitor works on reconstruction of residential buildings in the area affected by catastrophic floods.

- Based on the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program of the Disaster Relief Program in the Vukovar-Srijem County area, 2 283 Decisions on Reconstruction of Residential Buildings were issued on September 8, 2016.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning (MCPP)

Target groups/beneficiaries: persons affected by catastrophic floods in the area of Vukovar-Srijem County.

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget: within MCPP regular activities

Status evaluation:

The implementation of the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program of the Disaster Relief Program in the Vukovar-Srijem County, which was adopted and started with its activities in 2014, as a result of the state of emergency or disastrous floods in the county, was continued.

Recommendations for the following period:

The Working Group for monitoring of implementation of "Apolicy" (ApolitikA) document of goals of the will continue to work and will, among other things, address housing issues.

Main strategic activity:

2.3.6. Providing housing units for Homeland War victims

Measure 1: Granting housing loans and financial subsidy for the purchase of the first real estate.

a) Activity

- Implementation of granting housing loans and financial subsidy for the purchase of the first real estate.

b) Monitoring method /indicator:

- the total sum of assigned housing loans and financial subsidies and customer satisfaction surveys. In the shortened administrative procedure, the right to grant housing loans and financial subsidy for the purchase of the first real estate is determined. The priority List for year 2016 is being applied since March 1, 2016. In 2016, there were 11 728 requests for housing assistance and 353 requests for granting financial support. 348 housing loan applications were resolved in year 2016 along with 136 requests for financial subsidy resolved in the same year. 182 housing loans and 94 financial subsidies were disbursed in total of HRK 34,921,636.12. Loans granted in 2016 but not paid out will be paid out in 2017. In the course of 2016 (I, II, III / IV quarter 2016) requests for housing assistance were submitted until November 30, 2016. After this date, the scoring of request has started and is continued in the first quarter of 2017.

Implemented:

- disbursed a total of 182 housing loans and 94 financial subsidies, customer satisfaction surveys were not performed in 2016, but are planned for 2017, but there has been no objection to the granted housing loans or financial subsidies.
- 182 housing loans in the amount of HRK 25,343,852.12 were paid out.
- 94 financial supports in the amount of HRK 9,577,784.00 were paid out.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: Ministry of the Croatian War Veterans (MCWV)

Co-owner: Agency for Transactions and Mediation in Immovable Properties (ATMIP), Local self-government units (LSGU)

Target groups/beneficiaries: members of the family of the of veterans killed, captured or missing in the Homeland War, the disabled Homeland War veterans, and members of the close family of the deceased disabled Homeland War veterans (Homeland War victims) and Homeland War volunteers. Homeland War volunteers who have participated in the defence of Republic of Croatia sovereignty for at least two years, but do not possess the status of disabled Homeland War veterans, are only entitled to financial subsidy.

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget:

Planned: HRK 40.000.000,00 - Program 4015 A 522022 FP 0610–5121 „debt proceeds (Source 81)“

Disbursed: HRK 34.921.636,12

Status evaluation:

The granting of housing loans is a continuation of the existing measures implemented over a number of years, while the granting of financial subsidy for the purchase of the first property is a measure implemented since 2014. There were no significant problems with the granting of housing loans and financial subsidy, except for the delivery of documentation, especially documentation that cannot be obtained by official means but exclusively by the party. The difficulties were resolved by greater collaboration, frequent contacts and clarification to the parties that for the realization of their rights, they are obliged to deliver required documentation.

Recommendations for the following period:

Continuation of the implementation of the measure in 2017.

Measure 2: Residential construction for Homeland War victims

a) Activity

- Organized residential construction for Homeland War victims is carried out in cooperation with the ATMIP and the ministry responsible for construction, and on the property for construction provided by Local self-government (LSG).

b) Monitoring method

- Reports and consumer satisfaction surveys.

indicator:

- the number of residential units built and the number of victims who have been settled by the allocation of the apartment.

Implemented:

- Customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted in 2017, and minutes or reports from the meetings on the organized residential construction will be drawn up.

- Preparations for the construction of 108 apartments in Dubrovnik (Mokošica), in Imotski (village Bage) 24 apartments, in Kutina 19 apartments, in Podstrana 20 apartments, in Makarska 30 apartments and reconstruction of 13 residential buildings in Ston are continued.

- Meetings held with the City of Split, Split-Dalmatia County and other state administration bodies were held about preparations for the construction of 1 500 flats near City of Split.

- In 2016, with the award of a flat or housing loan for the purchase of a flats owned by the Republic of Croatia, 129 war victims were settled, of which 38 received a flat with a right of repurchase and 91 through a housing loan. Until the realization of the repurchase, or housing loan, they can use the apartments by renting them. These are the apartments that have been returned by the former beneficiaries or apartments of other bodies where the current beneficiaries were found to be eligible for housing care via MCWV or the emptied and devastated apartments that MCWV has taken over from other state bodies and repaired and allocated to new beneficiaries.

Owner/co-owner:

Owner of measure: Ministry of the Croatian War Veterans (MCWV)

Co-owner: Agency for Transactions and Mediation in Immovable Properties (ATMIP), Local self-government (LSG)

Target groups/beneficiaries: members of the family of the of veterans killed, captured or missing in the Homeland War, the disabled Homeland War veterans, and members of the close family of the deceased disabled Homeland War veterans (Homeland War victims).

Source of financing/co-financing:

State budget:

Planned: HRK 6.000.000,00 - Program 4015 A 522022 FP 0610 – 5121 „debt proceeds (Source 81)“

Disbursed: HRK 5.137.102,43

Status evaluation:

MCWV allocates apartments for Homeland War victims and a total of 129 apartments were allocated. In accordance with the plan, projects of organized residential construction are continued.

Recommendations for the following period:

In the following years, MCWV plans to further implement the organized residential construction but also take over the flats from other state administration bodies (SAB) in order to provide shelter to the vulnerable population as soon as possible.

2. How the various needs and situation of different population groups, especially the most marginalized and excluded, are considered, consulted on and incorporated in the strategies

The Republic of Croatia has adopted the Act on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Regulations defining the following:

This Act regulates the process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations, the manner of planning of legislative activities, the bodies responsible for the process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations, the manner of public consultation in this procedure and other related issues. The process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations is the process of preparation and drafting legislation through an analysis of direct effects, with the aim of selecting an optimal legal solution or undertaking other activities and measures. Through analysis of the direct effects of the draft legislative proposal, its effects are determined in the field of: economy, the small business, the labour market, social welfare and pension system, health, environmental protection, human rights protection and protection of competition. Within the process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations, it is mandatory to conduct the previous procedure for assessment of the effectiveness of regulations and assessment of the effectiveness of regulations, depending on the results of the analysis of the direct effects of regulation.

The general objective of the process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations is the examination of the proposals of possible normative or other solutions that encourage the business environment, strengthen the rule of law and reduce the costs of implementing regulations, while ensuring the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, personal and political freedoms and rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

Specific objectives of the process of assessment of the effectiveness of regulations are:

- to ensure openness and transparency of legislative process by inclusion of the public and interested public in drafting regulations
- to identify potential barriers to entrepreneurship and citizen status
- to encourage cooperation and inter-ministerial coordination of central government bodies in the process of drafting the law.

Working groups for drafting laws, strategies and other national documents include all stakeholders with special emphasis on the representatives of beneficiaries groups to which law, by-law and strategy is related.

Furthermore, pursuant to Art. 94 of the Physical Planning Act (OG 153/13, 65/17, hereinafter: PPA), the public shall have the right to participate in the procedures for the development and adoption of spatial plans, especially regarding the fact that public debate is an obligation. A public debate shall be held on the proposal of the spatial plan and everyone may participate in it. The participants in a public debate shall give opinions, proposals and remarks on the proposal of the spatial plan within the deadline and in the manner prescribed pursuant to this Act.

The State and bodies of local and regional self-government units shall be required to regularly inform the public of the situation in space, enable and promote public participation by developing social cohesion and strengthening awareness of the need for spatial protection and managing participation (collecting and organising proposals, obtaining expert opinions on public attitudes, media mediation, etc.).

Furthermore, please revise the provisions of Art. 7 of the PPA (OG 153/13, 65/17, hereinafter: PPA), which defines the principles of physical planning which are, among other things, *achieving and protecting public and individual interests*.

According to article 50. of the PPA the Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (hereinafter: the Strategy) shall be the fundamental national document for directing spatial development.

The Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia was adopted on 13 October 2017 (hereinafter: the Strategy) and was drawn up in cooperation with ministries, state administrative bodies and public companies. The Strategy puts emphasis on the need for inter-sector coordination and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in programmes, projects and plans.

The subject of housing care is processed in the Strategy in chapter 2.3. (http://www.mgipu.hr/doc/StrategijaPR/SPRRH_Nacrt_KP_17-04-19.pdf). Within this chapter the topic of state-subsidised housing construction (Programme of state-subsidised housing construction, hereinafter: POS Programme) was processed and for the purpose of it's implementation two ordinances were adopted: Temporary ordinance for the POS Programme and the Ordinance of minimal technical conditions for construction of apartments form POS Programme (OG 106/04, 25/06, 121/11, links:

https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2004_07_106_2064.html,

https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006_03_25_624.html,

https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2011_10_121_2417.html).

More information on the subject of POS Programme you can find on the website of Ministry of construction and physical planning (link: <http://www.mgipu.hr/default.aspx?id=9584>).

Also, there is The Housing care programme for Homeland War victims. This programme is implemented on the basis of needs determined by the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs, which is responsible for housing care for Homeland War victims. The Housing care programme for Homeland War victims includes organised construction of apartments and family houses with special adaptations for Homeland War veterans with 100% disability, the purchase of completed apartments or apartments completed to a high degree at new locations, adaptation of apartments and access to apartments as well as family houses for veterans with 100% disability. More information on the subject of The Housing care programme for Homeland War victims you can find on the website of Ministry of construction and physical planning (link: <http://www.mgipu.hr/default.aspx?id=9766>).

3. How the roles of multiple levels of government and other authorities are coordinated or incorporated

Pursuant to the Act on the Government of Republic of Croatia, the Government determines, directs and aligns the implementation of policies and programmes and to that end proposes and adopts strategies, issues guidelines, adopts acts and undertakes other measures necessary to regulate relations in the sphere of its competence.

The Government proposes to the Croatian Parliament laws and other acts, the state budget and the annual accounts, it executes laws and other decisions by the Croatian Parliament, adopts regulations for the implementation of laws as well as assumption and implementation of legally binding Europe union acts, conducts foreign and internal policies and European affairs, directs and supervises the work of state administration, takes care of the economic development of the country, directs the activities and development of public services and performs other tasks prescribed by the Constitution and the law.

The Government constitutes of the Prime Minister (Government president), one or more deputy prime ministers and ministers.

The *Local and Regional Self-Government Act* has defined that the units of local self-government in their self-governmental scope perform the tasks of local importance which directly address the needs of the citizens, and which are not assigned to state bodies by the Constitution or by law, and especially the tasks referring to: **organization of settlements and housing**, town and urban planning, utility services, child-care, social welfare, primary health protection, education and primary-school education, culture, physical culture and sports, consumer protection, protection and improvement of natural environment, fire-protection and civil defence.

Furthermore, in the field of physical planning, on 1 January 2014 the following three acts entered into force regulating the respective administrative fields of physical planning, building and building inspection proceeding: Physical Planning Act (OG 153/13, 65/17, Building Act (OG 153/13), Building Inspection Act (OG 153/13). By these acts significant changes have been introduced in order to speed up the process of spatial plan development and adoption, as well as the process of obtaining building permits.

The most important advantages arising from the PPA consist in the physical planning system are modified in such a way to be reduced to three levels, the national, regional and local one. In Article 60 of the PPA three levels of spatial plans are established:

- Spatial plans at the state level are the State plan for spatial development, spatial plan of a national park, spatial plan of a nature park, and other spatial plans of areas with special features the adoption of which is prescribed pursuant to the State plan for spatial development and urban development plan of a detached building area outside the settlement for economic and/or public purposes of state significance (hereinafter: the urban development plan of state significance),
- Regional level spatial plans are county spatial plans, Spatial plan of the City of Zagreb and urban development plan of a detached building area outside the settlement for public purposes of county significance (hereinafter: the urban development plan of county significance),
- Local level spatial plans are spatial development plans of a city or municipality, general urban plans and urban development plans.

Each of the previously indicated spatial plans is an implementation plan, meaning that on the basis of these plans official acts for implementation of spatial plans may be issued (location permits, permits for altering the intended purpose and use of a construction work, decisions on defining building plots, plotting study certificates and building permits).

Furthermore, the procedure of spatial plan development and adoption has been shortened and simplified, and spatial plan contents have been made more concise.

4. What goals and timelines have been set and whether these have been met

Please see answer to question 1, regarding the Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia from 2014 to 2020.

5. What roles have been assigned to independent authorities such as National Human Rights Institutions or Ombudspersons

Pursuant to the Act on the Ombudsman (1992), *Ombudsman* is a commissioner of the Croatian Parliament responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms as stipulated by Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, laws and international treaties on human rights and freedoms accepted by Republic of Croatia. Ombudsman is accredited as a national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights with "status A", by the International

Coordinating Committee for National Institutions at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Pursuant to the Act on the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities (2007), the ***Office of the ombudswoman for persons with disabilities*** was established and by the decision of the Croatian Parliament, the ombudswoman was appointed. She entered upon office on July 1, 2008 and her mandate was extended until 2016. The Office of the ombudswoman for persons with disabilities is an independent body whose main task is protecting, promoting and monitoring the rights and interests of persons with disabilities and thus constitute a mechanism for the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities to whom they can directly address and through which they can advocate their rights and influence decision making that affect their lives. In her work, the ombudswoman for persons with disabilities has the authority not assigned to Ombudsman - the right of access to the premises and insight into the manner of exercising the care of persons with disabilities who reside, work or are temporarily or permanently resident in premises of natural and legal persons and other legal entities based on special regulations. The ombudswoman for persons with disabilities submits the annual work report to the acceptance of Croatian Parliament.

The ***Act on the Ombudsman for Children*** stipulates that the Ombudsman for Children shall protect, monitor and promote the rights and interests of children on the basis of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, international treaties, binding legal acts of the European Union and laws.

The Ombudsman for Children is independent and autonomous in his/her work and is guided by the principle of justice and morals. None shall give directions or orders to the Ombudsman for Children regarding his/her work.

The ***Gender Equality Ombudsperson*** is acting on received complaints regarding discrimination in the area of gender equality, marital or family status and sexual orientation. The Gender Equality Ombudsperson acts independently and independently, monitors the implementation of the Gender Equality Act and other gender equality regulations. The Gender Equality Ombudsperson investigates cases of infringement of the principle of gender equality, cases of discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals by public bodies, units of local or regional self-government or other bodies with public authority, by employees of these bodies or other legal or natural persons.

In performing his/her duties, the Ombudsperson is authorized to notify, suggest and make recommendations.

Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

Croatian Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities was established in April 2012 by a decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the merger of the existing Human Rights Office and the Office for National Minorities.

The Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities carries out the following tasks: competent services related to the implementation of policies for the promotion and protection of human rights and especially the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia; monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of these policies, and analysing the condition of affairs, segments and components of human rights and the rights of national minorities; monitoring the harmonization of the legislative framework of the Republic of Croatia with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and international instruments and proposing modalities and measures for the full realization of these rights as well as their

improvement; monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and coordinating the preparation of reports on its implementation; monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and monitoring of annual and multi-annual action plans as well as regular reporting of competent bodies by co-ordination and drafting of reports; elaboration of competent backgrounds for national programs and plans: the National Program for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, the National Anti-Discrimination Plan, the National Plan to Combat the Human Trafficking, the National Program for Roma Minority and the Decade of Roma Minority Inclusion Action Plan 2005 - 2015.

The Office cooperates with the international community and international regional organizations, in order to improve national standards for the protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities,

6. How access to justice for claimants of the right to housing (or other economic, social and cultural rights) has been ensured in legislation or otherwise

In Republic of Croatia, the **General Administrative Procedure Act** (hereinafter: Act), regulates the rules pursuant to which bodies of state administration and other state bodies, the bodies of units of local and regional self-government and legal entities vested with public authority proceed and decide on administrative matters within their statutory scope of work. Administrative matters are matters in which public law authorities in administrative proceedings decide on the rights, obligations and legal interests of natural or legal persons or other parties pursuant to the direct application of laws and other regulations and general acts governing the appropriate administrative field. Administrative matters are also matters determined by law as administrative matters. This Act is applied in proceedings in all administrative matters. Only individual issues of administrative procedure may be regulated otherwise by a separate law, when this is necessary for proceeding in individual administrative areas, and if this is not in violation of the basic provisions and the purpose of this Act. This Act is applied in an adequate manner to the conclusion of administrative agreements and to any other action of public law authorities in the field of administrative law, when this has a direct effect on the rights, obligations or legal interests of parties, save as otherwise provided by law. Act is applied in an appropriate manner to proceedings for the protection of the rights or legal interests of parties in cases where legal persons who perform public services, decide on their rights, obligations or legal interests, save when the law prescribes judicial or other legal protection. Parties in administrative proceedings are natural or legal persons at whose request proceedings are instituted, or against whom the proceeding are raised or who have the right to participate in the proceedings for the purpose of protecting their rights or legal interests. Parties may also be bodies of state administration and other state bodies, bodies of units of local and regional self-government or other public law authorities without legal personality and their regional branches, i.e. branches or groups of persons associated by a common interest, provided they may hold the right or obligation which is being resolved in the administrative proceedings.

The administrative procedure in the Republic of Croatia is based on the following principles: principle of legality, principle of proportionality in the protection of the rights of parties and the public interest, principle of aid to the party, principle of establishing the substantive truth, principle of independence and free assessment of evidence, principle of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, principle of access to data and data protection, right of appeal, principle of protection of parties' acquired rights.

Furthermore, the Free Legal Aid Act (Official Gazette 143/13) establishes a system of legal aid that aims at ensuring effective legal protection and access to court and other bodies governed by public law to socially and economically endangered citizens.

The Act distinguishes two types of legal aid - primary and secondary legal aid.

Primary legal aid includes legal counselling, representation and filing submissions before bodies governed by public law.

This type of legal aid is provided by civil society associations, legal clinics and state administration offices in counties. Primary legal aid is provided through direct contact with primary legal aid providers and can be obtained in every legal matter. By one-year projects the Ministry of Justice finances civil society organizations, while some of them, in their programmes, provide primary legal aid to vulnerable social groups such as returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Secondary legal aid includes legal protection in civil and administrative court proceedings and exemption from paying costs of court proceedings as well as exemption from paying court fees.

Attorneys provide secondary legal aid in proceedings involving exercise of certain existential rights of persons, including proceedings related to property rights, employment, family matters and enforcement proceedings. It is also possible to obtain legal aid in other proceedings when such need arises from the applicant's specific life circumstances. It should be noted that when determining the applicant's property status, the real estate, owned by the applicant, in which applicant lives and which is required to meet the basic needs of the applicant and the household members, is not taken into account. Likewise, persons who are beneficiaries of social welfare rights will be granted secondary legal aid for the above mentioned proceedings without determination of their property status.

Basic information on free legal aid is available on the web site of the Ministry of Justice (<https://pravosudje.gov.hr/besplatna-pravna-pomoc/6184>).

According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Justice on free legal aid in 2016, a total of 10,256 legal aid applications were submitted, out of which 6,956 applications were approved. Out of the total number of applications approved, secondary legal aid has been granted in 395 cases (5.68%) for the proceedings related to exercising property rights. In other court proceedings related to the exceptional granting of secondary legal aid, when such need is caused by a specific life situation of the applicant, secondary legal aid was granted in 532 cases (7.65%).

The report on exercising the right to free legal aid and the amount of funds spent in 2016 is available on the web site of the Ministry of Justice (<https://pravosudje.gov.hr/strategije-planovi-i-izvjesca/6346>).

7. What new initiatives or approaches are being considered in plans for implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Goal 11 of the SDGs, particularly target 11.1?

Regarding the subject of *initiatives for implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Goal 11 of the SDGs, particularly target 11.1*, everything needed has already been implemented in the physical planning system of the Republic of Croatia, in view of the long tradition of physical planning in Croatia.