

Slovenia

Each year, the ESN European Semester Group follows the European Commission's cycle of policy coordination with EU Member States known as the European Semester and produces a report based on a questionnaire completed by public social services authorities on the social situation in European countries with a particular focus on social services. This country profile identifies the most important common challenges facing social services as reported by ESN members in Austria, related to three principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and makes recommendations for the 2023 European Semester. The full report, with cross-country analysis of all the participating countries is available [here](#).

1. Children's services

1.1 Key issues

Children's lack of access to family-based forms of alternative care has been a main problem in Slovenia for many years. Finding foster families for children with developmental problems and behavioural difficulties is a particular challenge. A significant number of fostering applicants view it as an introduction to adoption and, as a result, prefer to welcome young children with no medical or mental health issues. Other children remain in residential care for many years, because of a lack of foster families.

1.2 Recommendations

The promotion of foster care as the preferred alternative care mode should be a priority to ensure that all children grow up in a family environment and receive the support they need. This requires a nationwide promotion campaign to attract quality foster families and adequate financial resources so that foster families can be effectively supported.

2. Long-term care

2.1 Key issues

According to forecasts, in 2050, Slovenia will be, together with Bulgaria, the demographically oldest society in Europe. The costs of long-term care are expected to double from current costs by 2035. Slovenia also lags significantly behind the average GDP investment in long-term care compared to other OECD countries¹. Without a comprehensive care reform, the country can expect negative consequences regarding the availability and accessibility of formal care services and the quality of support for citizens who, due to illness, disability or age-related problems, are no longer able to meet their needs independently. Slovenia does not have a strategy to attract workers from other sectors or qualified professionals from other countries to the care sector and particularly evident is the shortage of staff in primary and social care facilities, according to a Slovenia's Court of Auditors report.² The Long-Term Care Act, which aims to address these issues, was adopted in December 2021. For the new government, which started its term in June 2022, the priority is to develop home-based long-term care services and

¹ https://www.eu-skladi.si/sl/dokumenti/rrf/01_si-rrp_23-7-2021.pdf

² Ibid.

expand the network of quality nursing homes for older people. The reduction of unjustified disparities in the cost of stay between different care facilities aims to reduce inequality of access to nursing homes.

2.2. Recommendations

The implementation of the Long-Term Care act will require a series of simultaneous actions, including providing adequate funding and human resources for the care sector, increasing the capacity of health services in nursing homes, and raising the skills and competences of informal care providers.

3. Support for homeless people

3.1. Key issues

Homelessness remains a significant social problem in Slovenia. The respondents emphasised that people with mental health conditions and drug users are particularly vulnerable to losing their homes. The situation is exacerbated by the shortage of housing where demand is greatest than offer due to the lack of public rental housing across the country. According to the most recent analysis of the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia in 2019, there was a need for an additional 9,150 public rental flats, 481 residential units and 526 serviced flats.³ Another challenge is the reluctance of people to change their accommodation to better suit their needs at specific stages of life.

³ The residential units are intended to temporarily solve the housing problems of the most vulnerable groups of residents, who remain homeless or live in unsustainable conditions. Residential units are not classic apartments. Most often, these are living spaces with shared kitchen and bathrooms. Their area is too to meet the standards of proper accommodation. A residential unit can also be assigned due to extreme social risk before the announced eviction based on a court decision on the vacating and handing over of the apartment to the owner, when an individual or family is at risk of homelessness as a result. In such cases, the residential unit is allocated mainly for the protection of minor children, elderly persons, individuals with mental health problems, disabled persons, chronically ill persons and unemployed persons. In comparison, serviced apartments are architecturally adapted spaces where the elderly run their households independently, but where at the same time they can receive assistance 24/7. They are intended for people over the age of 65 whose health conditions allow them to live independently. Ibid.

3.2. Recommendations

The government should support the establishment of innovative housing communities, including those targeting people with special needs. The existence of such communities would facilitate the provision of home-based social services for their residents.



[Read the report online](#)

Putting People First
Investing in Social
Services. Promoting
Social Inclusion.