

# The usage of EU resources in local social innovation

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## Abstract

Over the last few decades, the European Union (EU) has made available a number of resources for promoting and supporting social innovation in the field of poverty and social exclusion (cf. Sabato *et al.* 2015). These resources include, most obviously, funding but also networking opportunities, cognitive resources, visibility and reputational resources. This paper investigates a) how resources provided by the European Union (EU) have been used in socially innovative initiatives implemented at the local level, b) what has been their added value and c) which difficulties local actors have encountered when accessing and using these resources. Our study is based on the analysis of sixteen socially innovative initiatives implemented in five Member States (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Sweden and the UK) and concerning three policy areas: Roma inclusion (notably, education-related initiatives), homelessness and housing exclusion (Housing First), and labour market activation.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from our analysis. First, the EU level appears as a key layer of multi-scalar social innovation systems, often able to directly sustain local projects, bypassing the national level. Indeed, EU resources – especially financial and cognitive resources – have been used in most of our case studies and have often been deemed essential for the implementation of those projects. Second, in a number of cases EU resources have been strategically used by local actors in order to implement initiatives at odds with established domestic policy legacies, i.e. for experimenting with either new policy approaches or new instruments/methods within established approaches. We call this the leverage effect of EU resources. Third, the various welfare regimes are characterised by different social innovation patterns, especially in relation to institutionalization and up-scaling dynamics: welfare regime-related peculiarities can be identified, also when it comes to using EU resources for such purposes. While countries belonging to Universalistic and (in part) Corporatist welfare regimes appear particularly able in using EU resources to experiment with innovative initiatives, then mainstreaming successful projects into public policies once the EU co-funding period expires, this capacity appears much more limited in countries belonging to Familistic and Liberal welfare regimes. Fourth, EU resources have, remarkably enough, not been used for up-scaling socially innovative initiatives in any of our cases, even though the EU emphasizes that resources are also intended to be used for this. Finally, a number of shortcomings which make access to EU resources and their management difficult have been identified, including complex and time-consuming procedures related to EU funds and the inadequacy of the support provided by public bodies. These shortcomings often limit small organisations' ability to exploit EU resources, thus contributing to the creation of a 'frozen' situation where big and well-established organisations – which have developed expertise and experience in dealing with EU resources – enjoy a sort of incumbents' advantage.

**Keywords:** social innovation; poverty and social exclusion; EU structural funds; leverage effect; welfare regimes.

**JEL codes:** I3

# 1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, the European Union (EU) has made available a number of resources for promoting and supporting social innovation in the field of poverty and social exclusion (cf. Sabato *et al.* 2015). These resources include, most obviously, funding but also networking opportunities, cognitive resources, visibility and reputational resources. This report will analyse how these different EU resources have been used in socially innovative initiatives implemented at the local level, what has been their added value and which difficulties local actors have encountered when accessing and using those resources. In particular, we will investigate two aspects which seem particularly important in the light of previous research conducted in the framework of the ImPRovE project. First, we will explore how domestic actors have, often strategically, used EU resources for social innovation and to what extent this usage can amplify or ‘leverage’ domestic social innovation policies. Second, we will investigate whether there is a relationship between the features of social innovation patterns characterising the different European welfare regimes (cf. Kazepov *et al.* 2013) and their ability to exploit EU resources. Additionally, we will look at local social innovations which have not made any usage of EU resources in order to understand why they were not used.

Our analysis relies on a sample of sixteen case studies drawn from previous research conducted in the framework of Work Package 11 of the ImPRovE project, including both cases where EU resources were used and initiatives which did not make any usage of them. These case studies consist of socially innovative initiatives implemented at the local level in five countries (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, and the UK) and in three policy domains: Roma inclusion (notably, aspects linked to education), homelessness and housing exclusion (notably, Housing First projects), and labour market activation.

This report is structured as follows. In Section 2, we illustrate in more detail the research strategy. In Section 3, we provide a short overview of the main EU initiatives in the policy domains selected for this research in order to identify the resources made available by the EU in each of them. In Section 4, which represents the bulk of the study, we present and discuss the findings emerging from the horizontal analysis of the sixteen case studies in our sample. In Section 5, we reflect upon the leverage effect of EU resources and the relationship between EU resources for social innovation and welfare regimes. Section 6 wraps things up.

## 2. The research strategy

### ***2.1 Background to the study and research questions***

Our main aim is to analyse how EU resources have been used in socially innovative practices implemented at the local level. Before outlining the goals of this paper in more detail, we first want to situate it within in the broader goals of the ImPRovE project, as it builds on previous work both in terms of the theoretical insights as well as the data it uses.

It builds, **firstly**, on a previous working paper (Sabato *et al.* 2015), in which we explored the EU framework for social innovation. In this paper we tried to identify the resources provided by the European Union in order to promote and support socially innovative practices in the field of poverty

and social inclusion. By reviewing a number of EU instruments and processes likely to promote and support social innovation, we have shed light on a variety of resources that the EU made available in the period between 2006 and 2014. Although an explicit focus on social innovation at the EU level emerged only recently in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, a number of instruments and processes implemented in the past actually supported social innovation, yet without naming it as such. We have also shed light on the fact that resources for social innovation made available by the EU go beyond financial resources. In more detail, we have identified the following kinds of resources:

- *Financial resources*: including funds for implementing or up-scaling socially innovative practices, funds devoted to organisations operating in the social economy, funds dedicated to the regeneration of deprived urban or rural areas or for pilot projects.
- *Visibility and reputational resources*: for instance, the organisation of social innovation competitions or EU level/EU funded conferences promoting social innovation and socially innovative projects;
- *Networking and cognitive resources*: access to EU level/EU funded venues for exchanging experiences; organisation/financing of capacity building and training initiatives; access to publications, tool-kits, researches, conferences, and seminars promoted or funded by the EU.

This report builds, **secondly**, on an analysis of the ImPRovE case studies of socially innovative initiatives implemented at the local level. These case studies aimed to shed light on the governance arrangements characterising such initiatives and to understand how governance challenges typically confronting social innovation (ImPRovE Social Innovation team, n.d.) were addressed. Although the cases selected for this in-depth analysis were local level initiatives, they are embedded in a multi-level governance system and are hence sensitive to influences (constraints, opportunities, resources) coming from other governance levels, including the supra-national level (Kazepov *et al.* 2013).

Against this backdrop, the aim of the present report is to bring together knowledge acquired so far, with a view to understanding if, how and with what consequences resources for social innovation made available by the EU have been used in local socially innovative practices. To understand the effect of EU resources, we have selected sixteen ImPRovE case studies, notably those that are implemented in the fields of Roma inclusion (in particular, in the domain of education), homelessness and housing exclusion (Housing First initiatives), and labour market activation (for more details on case selection, see Section 2.2). By an in-depth analysis of these case-studies, we aim at answering the following questions:

- a) *In which cases and how have EU resources actually been used by domestic actors involved in socially innovative projects?*
- b) *What has possibly prevented actors' usage of EU resources?*
- c) *What has been the added value of those resources and the shortcomings/difficulties related to their usage?*
- d) *What are the consequences of the availability and usage of EU resources in the selected socially innovative projects?*

In the analysis, we pay particular attention to two interrelated aspects considered as key in the literature on Europeanization and in previous research on social innovation: 1) the possible strategic

usage of EU resources for social innovation by domestic actors (the so called ‘leverage effect’); and 2) the role that different welfare regimes and governance arrangements characterising EU countries may play in facilitating or constraining social innovations.

Firstly, the creative appropriation by domestic actors represents a key mechanism through which EU level processes may exert an influence on the domestic levels (Zeitlin 2005, 2009). Resources made available by the EU can be used by domestic actors as leverage, allowing them to “[...] accelerate, legitimate or impede the developments of certain policy options” (Erhel *et al.* 2005:229), thus helping those actors to advance their own policy agendas and overcome possible veto-points<sup>1</sup>. Evidence of such a strategic usage of EU resources is provided, for instance, by Verschraegen *et al.* (2011) who investigated the role played by the European Social Fund (ESF) in innovating activation policies in Belgium. According to the authors, EU resources had a “catalytic impact” on domestic activation policies by fostering innovation in policy instruments, governance arrangements, and the policy frames characterising this policy domain. Importantly, the authors (*ibid.*: 63) stress the fact that ESF resources did not produce this outcome by themselves: the key was appropriation of these resources by domestic policy entrepreneurs willing and able to use these instruments as leverage to further their own political agendas and policy preferences. Similar attention to the role and the ability of domestic actors to exploit opportunities and constraints coming from the EU level also characterises contributions from the literature on the usages of Europe (c.f. Section 2.2).

Consequently, in the present research we will try to assess,

- *if and to what extent such a leverage effect has characterised the usage of EU resources devoted to social innovation in our case studies.*
- *In this case, which conditions have facilitated these dynamics and what have been their outcomes?*

Secondly, we will investigate the relationship between EU resources for social innovation and welfare regimes. As for this aspect, Kazepov *et al.* (2013:34) hypothesise that different welfare regimes may produce specific governance arrangements creating different contextual conditions able to hinder or to facilitate the development of socially innovative practices. Notably, specific features of national welfare regimes and governance arrangements may have consequences in terms of possibilities to develop social innovation and ability to up-scale these innovations, thus eventually leading to different types of social innovation patterns. In a nutshell (Kazepov *et al.* 2013: 36-37):

- *Universalistic welfare regimes* are expected to display a relatively high potential for developing social innovation and a high capacity of up-scaling. Up-scaling is facilitated by the strong role played by the state (in this sense, the authors refer to “supported social innovation” dynamics), which may, however, limit the potential for experimentation.

– *Liberal welfare regimes* are likely to be characterised by patterns of “self-sustained social innovation”, with a key role played by market dynamics. The potential for social innovation is high but these innovations are often frail: given the high reliance on market logic and economic sustainability,

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<sup>1</sup> As pointed out by Verschraegen *et al.* (2011:56), “Usage refers to the transformation of EU resources into political practice with the intention of pursuing a specific goal: influencing a particular policy decision, increasing one’s capacity for action and one’s access to the political process [...]”.

one can in fact expect a high mortality rate for socially innovative initiatives. In this context, the capacity of up-scaling social innovation is potentially high but these innovations are often intended to replace provision from the welfare state.

- *Corporatist-conservative welfare regimes* are expected to display a relatively high capacity of developing social innovation and a high up-scaling capacity. However, given the presence of a number of veto-points, up-scaling is somewhat slow and the possibility to develop social innovation results from an ability to find compromises among all the actors involved (“negotiated social innovation”).

- *Familistic welfare regimes* are likely to develop patterns of “fragmented social innovation”. Autonomous actors and informal groups display a potentially high capacity to develop social innovation. However, they often occupy the gaps left in an environment dominated by the strongest, institutionalized and privileged actors. Up-scaling of socially innovative initiatives is very difficult and support from welfare state institutions is limited.

- *Transitional welfare regimes* are characterised by a highly diversified potential to develop social innovation as well as by a varied capacity of up-scaling.

Taking into account the hypotheses above, the present study also aims to *analyse whether the various welfare regimes display different social dynamics also when it comes to exploiting EU resources supporting local socially innovative practices*. In other words, we will investigate the existence of any interactions between national social innovation dynamics and national modes of using EU resources. In particular, we will focus on two aspects which are expected to differentiate between social innovation patterns in the various welfare regimes and to which the EU has paid a certain amount of attention: the institutionalization of socially innovative initiatives, possibly mainstreaming them into public policies, and up-scaling dynamics.

As institutionalization, mainstreaming and up-scaling are contested notions, it appears useful to clarify how they will be used in the present paper. We refer to institutionalization of EU co-funded socially innovative projects when, after the expiration of the EU funding period, the implementation of the projects continues, relying on domestic resources.<sup>2</sup> *Institutionalization* may take place in two ways, partly depending on the nature of the specific projects: 1) *mainstreaming*: the initiative becomes part of provisions offered by public services at local or national level and it is funded through public resources (i.e., it has been mainstreamed into public policies); or 2) *self-sufficiency*: the initiative is continued by actors other than the public authorities, mainly relying on non-public resources. Obviously, one can observe different degrees of institutionalization since the stability of the various initiatives after the EU co-funding period may vary. In any case, in our understanding institutionalization (in the form of both mainstreaming and self-sufficiency) indicates a qualitative leap: the initiative moves from an experimental or precarious status to a more stable one<sup>3</sup>. Conversely, *up-scaling* refers to quantitative aspects and it relates to extensions of the initiative to include, for instance, more clients/beneficiaries or a broader geographical coverage. Obviously, these *phenomena* do not always go together and one can find situations of institutionalization without any up-scaling.

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<sup>2</sup> Domestic resources can come from the national level, but also from the regional or local level.

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, this process may entail a transformation of the nature of the initiative which moves from a spontaneous idea to a policy instrument compatible with mainstream social policy programmes.



As socially innovative actions often start as small and local level initiatives, institutionalizing and up-scaling them in order to have a wider impact and to ensure a broader access often represents a remarkable challenge (ImPRovE Social Innovation team, n.d.), to which the EU pays a lot of attention (cf. Sabato *et al.* 2015). First, the long-term sustainability of the initiatives funded (i.e., their institutionalization) is among the objectives of EU funded interventions. Second, EU financial resources for social innovation (in particular, the ESF) are increasingly devoted to facilitating the up-scaling of small scale initiatives.

## **2.2 Case selection and research strategy**

In order to answer the research questions listed above, we will rely on a sample of sixteen case studies of local socially innovative initiatives drawn from Work Package 11, including eleven cases in which EU resources were used and five cases in which they were not used<sup>4</sup>. Specifically, we have selected all cases in the five countries included in this analysis (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, and the UK) related to three policy areas: Roma inclusion (notably, initiatives concerning education), homelessness policies (notably, Housing First initiatives), and labour market activation. Rather than randomly selecting our cases, we have opted for an information-oriented case selection strategy (Flyvbjerg 2006), with the intent to gather the greatest possible amount of relevant information about which key features of cases are relevant to the use or otherwise of EU resources. In fact, our choice of the three policy areas mentioned above was motivated by the fact that these policy domains were specifically targeted in the framework of EU anti-poverty policies and a number of resources have been devoted to them in the last two decades (activation and Roma inclusion) or more recently (Housing First) (cf. Section 3). As a consequence, we expect that local socially innovative initiatives in these policy areas should be ‘most-likely cases’ in which there is a high probability that EU resources have been used by national actors in order to implement domestic projects; this should allow us to fully uncover the dynamics characterising such a usage and the constraints possibly hindering it. This said, we are aware that, while this research will provide us the opportunity to explore the issues at stake and to gather useful information, our sample is too limited to allow generalisations.

As it emerges from Table 1, socially innovative initiatives primarily targeted at labour market activation are the most frequent in our sample: seven case studies focused on this policy area, while five cases concerned Housing First initiatives and only four Roma inclusion (education-related initiatives). Although it is possible to identify a prevalent policy focus for each case study, it should be noted that the initiatives under review typically involve various policy areas. Initiatives primarily targeted at Roma inclusion, for instance, deal not only with educational inclusion but often also concern measures aiming at the activation of the target group on the labour market. Initiatives aiming at labour market activation are sometimes targeted at people with an immigrant background and can display a broad understanding of the concept of labour market activation, including, for instance, activities aiming at social integration beyond the labour market (which is often considered an innovative aspect of such projects).

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<sup>4</sup> A short description of each case study is provided in Annex 1 and bibliographical references are reported under the Section ‘References to the case studies’.

When it comes to the countries where these socially innovative practices have been implemented, our sample includes five countries corresponding to four welfare regimes: Austria (three cases) and Belgium (three cases); Sweden (four cases); Italy (two cases); the United Kingdom (four cases). Italy is slightly underrepresented in our sample<sup>5</sup>, while no countries belonging to transitional welfare regimes are included.

**Table 1. Overview of the case studies**

	Case study	Country	Usage of EU resources <sup>6</sup>	Policy area
1	Thara	AT	Yes	Roma inclusion (education)
2	Ánde Škola (Alteramente)	IT	Yes	Roma inclusion (education)
3	MigRom	UK	Yes	Roma inclusion (education)
4	Romane Buca in Sundbyberg	SE	Yes	Roma inclusion (education)
5	The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment	BE	No	Housing first
6	Camden Housing First	UK	No	Housing first
7	Tutti a casa (All at home)	IT	Yes	Housing first
8	Housing First Stockholm	SE	No	Housing first
9	Housing First Vienna	AT	Yes	Housing first
10	Ten For Cooking	BE	Yes	Labour market activation
11	Inspire! NEET <sup>7</sup> programme	UK	Yes	Labour market activation
12	Rätt Steg (Right Step)	SE	Yes	Labour market activation
13	Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support)	SE	Yes	Labour market activation
14	ERfA - Sewing Workshop	AT	Yes	Labour market activation
15	De Kringwinkel	BE	No	Labour market activation
16	Furniture Reuse Network	UK	No	Labour market activation

Source: authors' elaboration from the Work Package 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

Considering the sixteen case studies used in this report, further clarification is needed. It should be noted that the analysis of the European dimension of the local socially innovative practices under scrutiny was not the key focus of those case studies. The local dynamics of socially innovative projects

<sup>5</sup> In order to overcome this limitation, we sometimes complement information drawn from our two case studies with evidence from other Italian case studies conducted in the framework of Work Package 11 of the ImPRovE project. The latter however concern other policy areas and, for this reason, they are not part of the present analysis.

<sup>6</sup> As explained in Section 2.1, we adopt a broad understanding of 'EU resources' including, besides financial resources, also networking and cognitive resources, visibility and reputational resources (cf. also Sabato *et al.* 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Young people not in employment, education or training.

were mainly investigated without assuming a priori any role for the EU. We have, however, decided to include in the sample a number of cases where a certain degree of involvement of the EU was apparent. The usage of EU resources (if any) has been, furthermore, explored through a series of follow-up interviews and/or additional desk research<sup>8</sup>, which resulted in a series of (unpublished) short reports.

This approach is consistent with the research strategy suggested by the literature on the ‘usages of Europe’ (cf. Graziano *et al.* 2011) and is useful for avoiding any ‘EU bias’, that is the risk of taking it for granted that the EU has played a role in the development of the dynamic under scrutiny. Indeed, in contrast to most literature on Europeanization (which takes as a starting point the EU level) researchers adopting a usages of Europe approach suggest the use of ‘bottom-up’ research strategies, “[...] start[ing] from the national level (regarding it as more relevant in understanding welfare reforms) to see whether, where, when, and how the EU has been mobilized by national actors during the reform dynamic”<sup>9</sup> (Graziano *et al.* 2011: 5). In addition, the literature on the usages of Europe is largely consistent with the broad understanding of EU resources that we adopt in the present study.<sup>10</sup>

Before discussing evidence emerging from our case studies (Section 4), we will first give an overview of the main initiatives undertaken by the EU in the three policy domains that we have selected for our analysis, in order to identify the main resources made available for local actors.

### **3. The policy context: overview of the main EU level initiatives in the selected policy areas**

#### **3.1 Roma inclusion**

The EU has been attentive to the situation of Roma people in Europe since the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, when the issue was linked to the Eastern enlargement of the Union (Vermeersch 2012). The respect for and protection of minorities was included among the Copenhagen criteria as a condition for EU membership, and increasing attention was given to the situation of the Roma by the European Commission (EC) in its reports on the accession process (Curcic *et al.* 2014, Vermeersch 2012). While before the enlargement the issue was mainly addressed in terms of assistance to asylum seekers from outside the Union, since 2004 Roma people have been primarily seen as “[...] the EU’s largest transnational minority” (Vermeersch 2012: 1196): the emphasis is thus on avoiding discrimination and promoting the socio-economic inclusion of this group of EU citizens facing

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<sup>8</sup> A total of eleven additional interviews on EU resources for social innovation were conducted by the national teams. Follow-up interviews were conducted for the cases *Thara* (1), *Ánde Škola* (1), *Romane Buca in Sundbyberg* (1), *The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment* (1), *Tutti a casa* (1), *Housing First Stockholm* (1), *Housing First Vienna* (1), *Inspire! NEET programme* (2), *Rätt Steg* (1), *Sprakstodjande insatser* (1).

<sup>9</sup> In our case, the design and/or the development of socially innovative projects.

<sup>10</sup> This literature considers a variety of resources (and constraints) made available by the EU. Resources are not limited to financial resources but include legal resources (e.g., primary legislation, secondary legislation, case law); financial resources (budgetary constraints and EU funds); -cognitive and normative resources (Communications, ideas, etc.); political resources (including argumentation, blame avoidance, mechanisms, multilevel games); institutional resources (such as committees and agencies) (Graziano *et al.* 2011:10).

considerable risks of marginalization, a problem going beyond Eastern countries. Since then, a number of initiatives have been promoted by the EU, initially by the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, and different kinds of resources have been made available.

First, with regard to legal resources, a number of Directives, while not exclusively targeted at Roma people, do concern them and provide a general legislative framework (cf. European Parliament 2015:22). This is in particular the case of the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive adopted in 2000. Furthermore, a series of resolutions adopted in the European Parliament in 2005, 2006 and 2008 invited the European Commission to develop a comprehensive European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion (cf. Vermeersch 2012: 1201). Finally, in 2013 the Council enacted a non-binding 'Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states' (Council of the European Union 2013), with a view to strengthening the implementation of the national Roma inclusion strategies by providing, among other things, recommendations on effective policy measures in the fields of education, employment, health and housing.

Besides legal resources, cognitive resources, networking opportunities and visibility have also been provided, including through the publication of a number of Communications and reports by the European Commission, the organization of high-level conferences and thematic European Summits, the establishment of platforms, various activities within the Social OMC (including peer review meetings), and the implementation of other specific 'soft' (i.e. non-binding) processes aimed at encouraging the Member States (MS) to implement effective policies for Roma inclusion and facilitating the exchange of good practices (cf. Curcic *et al.* 2014, European Parliament 2015, Frazer and Marlier 2011, Vermeersch 2012). Example of these activities include<sup>11</sup>:

- The establishment, in 2008, of EURoma, a network bringing together representatives from twelve MS with a view to promoting the use of the structural funds for the implementation of effective policies for the social inclusion of Roma people (Vermeersch 2012: 1201).
- The establishment, in 2009, of an Integrated Platform for Roma inclusion composed of Member States' representatives, Roma civil society representatives, policy-makers and experts. The Platform, which is led by the Presidency of the Council, aims at promoting cooperation among the actors involved and at identifying and exchanging good practices on Roma inclusion (Vermeersch 2012: 1201).
- The elaboration, in 2009, in the framework of the activities of the Integrated Platform, of the 'Ten common basic principles on Roma inclusion' (Council of the European Union 2009). These principles are: 1) constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; 2) explicit but not exclusive targeting; 3) intercultural approach; 4) aiming for the mainstream; 5) awareness of the gender dimension; 6) transfer of evidence-based policies; 7) use of EU instruments; 8)

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<sup>11</sup> Besides the initiatives directly promoted by the European Union, we should mention the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005-2015, a process launched in 2005 which included the European Commission in the role of partner organisation. The Decade involved twelve European countries with a significant Roma population: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain. Each of those countries was asked to elaborate a Decade Action Plan illustrating strategies and measures for addressing Roma exclusion and discrimination in the areas of housing, health care, employment and education (Curcic *et al.* 2014).

involvement of regional and local authorities; 9) involvement of civil society; and 10) active participation of Roma.

Looking at the most recent initiatives, considerable attention is still given to the issue of Roma inclusion in the Europe 2020 Strategy. The launch of an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies was among the initiatives foreseen by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (European Commission 2010:10). Such a framework was indeed developed in 2011 through the publication of a Communication from the European Commission (2011) which was then adopted by the Council (2011). The framework, aimed at guiding national Roma policies and mobilising funds available at EU level to support Roma inclusion, is based on four pillars (Frazer and Marlier 2011:3): access to education, jobs, healthcare and housing. Member States are expected to define national Roma integration goals and to define appropriate strategies in line with the common basic principle on Roma inclusion (*ibid.*). In the Social Investment Package (SIP), the European Commission (2013a:13) committed itself to support the Member States by preparing a Recommendation on best practices for Roma inclusion<sup>12</sup>, by reporting annually on progress in the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies within the European Semester, and by promoting the exchange of good practices and the development of transnational cooperation.

Finally, financial resources have been provided, especially through the structural funds (European Parliament 2015: 27, Frazer and Marlier 2011). In particular, the ESF has supported projects aiming at Roma inclusion in the sectors of education, vocational training, and employment; the European Regional Development Fund has been used for financing infrastructures and housing projects, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for interventions in disadvantaged rural areas<sup>13</sup>.

In most of the EU initiatives listed above, including, for instance, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, the SIP, the 2013 Recommendation and the Structural and Investment Funds, education is presented as a key area for the social and employment inclusion of Roma people. Educational disadvantage is indeed widespread among Roma (in particular, Roma children) who often achieve lower educational outcomes and, consequently, experience serious difficulties in the labour market (Frazer and Marlier 2011: 5). In this domain, urgent problems to be addressed include (*ibid.*:8, European Parliament 2015:24): the segregation of Roma children in special schools or classes; the low participation rate of Roma children in compulsory education and the high drop-out rate; the low rate of participation in tertiary education; the low literacy rates.

### **3.2 Homelessness and housing exclusion (Housing First)**

Tackling homelessness and housing exclusion was among the key objectives of the Open Method of Coordination on social inclusion when it was launched in 2000. Since then, a number of activities

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<sup>12</sup> As mentioned above, a Recommendation was adopted by the Council in 2013.

<sup>13</sup> This said, while recognising that structural funds have been a key source for the implementation of projects aiming at Roma inclusion, existing assessments point to the fact that they have not been duly exploited in most countries, eventually producing a limited impact (European Parliament 2015, Frazer and Marlier 2011). More in general, while most countries have elaborated policy frameworks for Roma inclusion, the implementation of these policies has often been unsatisfactory (European Parliament 2015, Frazer and Marlier 2011).

undertaken in the framework of the Social Open Method of Coordination (Social OMC)<sup>14</sup> have dealt with this issue, to the extent that tackling homelessness has gradually become a key area of EU social policy, and a dynamic multi-level arena involving EU, national and local actors has developed (Gosme 2013). In particular, cognitive and networking resources provided by the Social OMC have contributed to raising MS' awareness of the need for a more strategic approach to homelessness, based on integrated and comprehensive strategies (Frazer *et al.* 2010: 130). These resources also triggered the mobilisation of state and non-state actors operating in the field<sup>15</sup> and promoted transnational exchanges and transfer dynamics (Gosme 2013: 47). Furthermore, EU financial resources have been used to implement projects related to homelessness – in a number of cases, innovative projects (cf. FEANTSA 2012) – or to carry out studies and evaluations, to develop methodologies, and to perform capacity-building activities (in particular, the PROGRESS programme).

A certain degree of attention to this policy area also characterises the Europe 2020 Strategy. Indeed, to “identify methods and means to best continue the work initiated on homelessness and housing exclusion [...]” is among the initiatives promoted by the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (European Commission 2010: 11). In the Social Investment Package as well, the European Commission has invited the Member States to “[c]onfront homelessness through comprehensive strategies based on prevention, housing-led approaches and reviewing regulations and practices on eviction, taking into account the key findings of the guidance on confronting homelessness provided in this Package” (European Commission 2013: 12).

The development of ‘housing-led approaches’ – i.e., “[...] policies and practices that see permanent housing solutions as the first response to situations of homelessness” (FEANTSA 2012:15) – is seen as a priority in recent EU debates and represents a potential area for social innovation in the field (*ibid.*). The ‘Housing First’ model is considered one of the most promising practical applications of the housing-led approach to homelessness and, in recent times, it has gained a considerable amount of attention and support at the EU level. In a nutshell, the Housing First approach – which derives from pioneer initiatives developed in the United States – relies on the idea that homeless people (including people with complex and multiple needs) should be provided with long-term housing (coupled with multidisciplinary social support) as soon as possible (Busch-Geertsema 2013). In the European context, such an approach was considered as an innovative practice insofar as it reversed the usual ‘staircase approaches’, which are based on the idea that, before having access to a tenancy, homeless people with complex needs have to demonstrate they are ready to sustain long-term accommodation (*ibid.*).

Although everybody agrees on these main features of the Housing First model, the concrete interpretation as well the implementation of specific projects within Europe and the world vary to some extent (cf. Busch-Geertsema 2013, Pleace and Bretherton 2013). In order to compare existing projects and gauge their effectiveness, the European Commission funded – through the second PROGRESS call for social experimentation (2010) – the Housing First Europe project (HFE). The aim of the project was precisely to test and evaluate Housing First initiatives in five European cities in order to assess the potential and the limits of the approach and to identify its essential elements (European

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<sup>14</sup> Including EU and national reporting, peer reviews, high-level conferences and Presidency events.

<sup>15</sup> In particular, the European Union provides financial support to the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless people (FEANTSA), a European network composed of national or regional umbrella organisations of service providers in the domain of homelessness and housing exclusion.

Commission 2012). Implemented between 2011 and 2013, HFE was led by the Danish Board of Social Services and the partnership was made up of ten partners, mainly local public authorities from different countries.<sup>16</sup> Besides the five ‘test sites’ to be evaluated (Amsterdam, Budapest, Copenhagen, Glasgow, Lisbon), another five ‘peer sites’ where Housing First projects were also implemented (Dublin, Ghent, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Vienna) were involved in order to bring their experiences into the debate on the evaluation of the test sites. Activities carried out in the project were organised around two strands: a) Research and Evaluation (under the responsibility of a team of evaluators made up of researchers from various countries); b) Mutual Learning activities aimed at promoting the discussion of the results of the evaluation among various stakeholders and facilitating exchanges on existing Housing First projects implemented in Europe and beyond.

### **3.3 Labour market activation**

‘Activating’ individuals and welfare systems is a priority that has been high on both the EU and Member States’ social policy agendas for the last 20 years (Weishaupt 2013). Since the 1990s, the EU has significantly contributed to this ‘activation turn’<sup>17</sup> by providing the Member States with a number of resources. These include cognitive resources and networking opportunities (especially in the framework of the Social OMC, the Europe 2020 Strategy and through the PROGRESS and the EaSI programmes), financial resources (through the European Social Fund, the PROGRESS and the EaSI<sup>18</sup> programmes) and, to a lesser extent, legal resources (notably, non-binding Recommendations).

Initially related to employment policy (cf., for instance, the ‘Employability pillar’ of the European Employment Strategy), the activation approach was gradually extended to social inclusion policies and, in particular, to initiatives targeted at minimum income recipients (Weishaupt 2013). Because access to employment is viewed as the main way to exit poverty and social exclusion, the implementation of activities aiming at labour market integration has been considered as a key priority for the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups<sup>19</sup>. EU discourses on social inclusion through labour market

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<sup>16</sup> Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

<sup>17</sup> According to Weishaupt (2013), in the 1990s activation represented a veritable paradigm shift. This said, as recognised by the author, since then the concept has been widely used but not precisely defined. In the view of most authors, the notion of activation is characterised by (*ibid.*:191): “(a) a closer connection between income protection and employment promotion [...] (b) new policy approaches targeting allegedly ‘inactive’ persons[...] (c) a recalibration of social security systems such that they no longer promote ‘early exit’ [from the labour market]”.

<sup>18</sup> Employment and Social Innovation Programme.

<sup>19</sup> The Council ‘Recommendation on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems’ enacted in 1992 was one of the first Community-level initiatives in the field of poverty and social exclusion (Council of the European Communities 1992). In this text, the Council recommended that the Member States recognise the basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity as part of national policy strategies to combat social exclusion, and to adapt their social protection systems as necessary. Among the principles and guidelines addressed to the Member State, it was stressed in the Recommendation that people who are capable of working should be entitled to the minimum income "subject to active availability for work or for vocational training with a view to obtaining work". Member States were urged to adopt "arrangements in respect of persons whose age and condition render them fit for work, which will ensure they receive effective help to enter or re-enter working life, including training where appropriate".

activation go beyond strict employment policies, however, and are generally situated within a broader framework, starting from the idea that social exclusion is a ‘multidimensional phenomenon’ (cf. Room 2010). Such a broader approach was gradually developed in the 2000s in the framework of the Social OMC and is fully illustrated in the Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market enacted by the European Commission in 2008. In this document, the European Commission (2008) referred to the concept of ‘active inclusion’, calling upon the Member States to elaborate integrated and comprehensive strategies for the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, combining three elements: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets, and access to quality services. More recently, the active inclusion strategy has been integrated into the Europe 2020 Strategy, as a constitutive element of the Social Investment Package (European Commission 2013a, 2013b). As discussed elsewhere (Sabato *et al.* 2015), over time the European Social Fund has supported the implementation of the Social OMC and of the Social Investment Package, including by the co-funding of socially innovative measures aiming at promoting the social inclusion of disadvantaged people with a view to their sustainable integration in employment.

While the 2008 Commission Recommendation called for a broad understanding of the concept of active inclusion and a balanced implementation of its three constitutive elements (i.e., not limited to labour market activation), neither its follow-up at the EU level nor its implementation in the Member States have been fully consistent with the stated purpose. Indeed, looking at key documents of the European Semester (notably, the Annual Growth Survey and the Country-specific Recommendations addressed to the Member States), the need to ‘activate’ social assistance recipients on the labour market emerges as the overwhelming message (Peña-Casas *et al.* 2014)<sup>20</sup>. An incomplete and unbalanced implementation of the 2008 Recommendation also characterises practices in the Member States. According to the assessment performed in 2013 by the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (Frazer and Marlier 2013), comprehensive strategies integrating the three pillars of the Recommendation were largely missing in most countries. In most cases, emphasis was rather put on the ‘labour market pillar’ of active inclusion. Such a tendency has continued in recent years, though the situations in the Member States differ. According to Bouget *et al.* (2015) reforms undertaken over the crisis years have generally entailed a deterioration of the adequacy of minimum income protection and an increased emphasis on labour market conditionality attached to those benefits, while the availability of good-quality and enabling social services varies widely among the Member States.

## **4. The usage of EU resources in local socially innovative experiences: evidence from the case studies**

### **4.1 Overview of EU resources used in the case studies**

Considering the sixteen socially innovative initiatives included in our sample, EU resources (the four different types mentioned earlier) were used in eleven cases (Table 2). These resources were used,

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<sup>20</sup> Since 2014, however, a growing number of Country-specific Recommendations concerning the adequacy or the coverage of social assistance benefits have been enacted (*ibid.*).



more particularly, in all the four case studies dealing with Roma inclusion<sup>21</sup>, in five (out of seven) case studies on labour market activation, and in two out of the five cases concerning Housing First projects. In two case studies – *De Kringwinkel* and the *Furniture Reuse Network* – EU financial resources were used for activities somehow outside the scope of the present report.<sup>22</sup> In the former project, EU resources were not used for developing or sustaining the *Kringwinkel* network<sup>23</sup> nor by the *Kringwinkel Antwerpen* (which are the focus of the ImPROvE Work Package 11 report on which we have drawn). This said, several individual *Kringwinkel* firms have been involved in local ESF projects, which contributed to the development of tailored work experience and support trajectories that are complementary or supplementary to their core activities<sup>24</sup>. The same applies to the *Furniture Reuse Network*: while ESF resources were not key for the operation and expansion of this network, some individual centres might have been involved in local ESF funded projects.

Drawing on Sabato *et al.* (2015), we consider four different kinds of EU resources that the EU has made available over time to support social innovation in the Member States (see also Section 2.1): financial resources, cognitive resources, networking opportunities, visibility and reputational resources. The EU resources actually used in our case studies were especially financial or cognitive resources, while networking and visibility opportunities were less exploited (Table 2).

*Financial resources* made available by the EU were used to develop socially innovative initiatives in nine cases<sup>25</sup>. Most of them made use of the European Social Fund, which contributed to seven initiatives. In one case financial resources were provided by the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), which was used to finance the implementation of an engagement scheme for the Roma community in Southern Manchester as part of the FP7 research project *MigRom*. Finally, the European Refugee Fund (ERF) co-financed the initiative *Sprakstodjande insatser*, a Swedish project aiming at providing training courses and services to immigrants.

*Cognitive resources* were used in eight cases<sup>26</sup>, although their actual usage and impact considerably vary across the initiatives. We provide a few examples. In the case of the Austrian project *Thara*, there seems to be a high level of awareness about EU level initiatives concerning Roma inclusion. The Thara project may have increased the attention to the issue of Roma inclusion in the Austrian context and facilitated the implementation of initiatives in that policy domain. In both the Italian project *Tutti a*

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<sup>21</sup> However, in the case of the Italian project *Ánde Škola*, ESF resources were not directly targeted at Roma inclusion. ESF co-funding was used in the framework of a project from the Apulia region – ‘Principi Attivi’- aiming at supporting young entrepreneurs, i.e. the members of the association implementing the project (Alteramente).

<sup>22</sup> In Tables 1 and 2, we therefore mentioned that no use was made of EU resources.

<sup>23</sup> *Kringwinkel* centres are autonomous social economy firms that promote and facilitate the reuse of old materials.

<sup>24</sup> Interestingly enough, knowledge created in the context of the *Kringwinkel* network became a resource for other ESF projects in Belgium. Indeed, the EFQM quality label, a quality standard now used by ESF Flanders to grant certificates to various organisations, was actually co-developed by the *Kringwinkel*.

<sup>25</sup> Case studies no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. It should be noted that, until 2010, EU financial resources for social innovation were provided through a number of programmes which did not explicitly include the promotion of social innovation among their objectives (cf. Sabato *et al.* 2015). For this reason, data about the actual amount of funding actually devoted to such a purpose are lacking. Since 2010, the promotion of social innovation is among the objectives of programmes and instruments such as the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (*ibid.*).

<sup>26</sup> Case studies no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, and 12.

*casa* and the *Housing First* initiative in Vienna, national actors were aware of documents and repositories of good practice (from the EU itself or produced in the context of EU funded programmes), which they eventually used to design their own initiatives. In the case of the Italian initiative *Ánde Škola*, the promoters of the project had the possibility to attend some meetings and training sessions (funded through EU resources) aimed at improving the competences of social operators working on Roma issues.

In five cases<sup>27</sup>, EU resources were an occasion for *networking* and, in some of those cases, the networks that developed were used for the implementation of socially innovative projects. This is for instance the case of the project *Ánde Škola*, where participation in a series of EU-funded training meetings organised in the framework of the National Strategy for Roma inclusion allowed the persons in charge of the project to get into contact with other organisations operating in the policy field, one of these then becoming a partner in the project. In other cases, people involved in the implementation of a national project were already members of EU-wide networks. This was the case for *Housing First Vienna*: Neunerhaus – an NGO involved in the project – is in close contact with the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and with experts participating in a PROGRESS funded project on Housing First (see Section 3.2). In the case of *Romane Buca*, the Swedish team responsible for the project was involved in exchanges within an international network including organisations from Finland, Spain, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Similarly, the people in charge of the *Inspire! NEET programme* hosted a number of seminars with the managers of various initiatives targeted at NEETs across Europe in order to present their activities and exchange experiences.

In five cases<sup>28</sup>, the use of EU resources provided a certain *visibility*. Besides visibility coming from the participation in EU-funded events or networks, the inclusion in EU-related repertoires of good-practices or other cognitive resources was a good opportunity to spread knowledge about local socially innovative initiatives. This was for instance the case for the English project *Inspire! NEET programme*, that was included in a report on the use of the ESF in England.

As emerges from Table 2, access to the full array of available EU resources (from financial resources to visibility) can be detected in four cases: *Ánde Škola*, *Inspire! NEET programme*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Romane Buca*. The latter initiative appears particularly interesting when it comes to illustrating the possible synergies between these resources. Indeed, as mentioned above, in the case of *Romane Buca* ESF resources were used not only to finance activities at the local level but also to develop an international network. Field trips and working meetings organised in the context of network activities were good opportunity for networking, exchanging knowledge and providing the organisations involved with visibility. It should be noted that the creation of this kind of dynamics for spreading knowledge about the national/local initiative financed is indeed among the objectives of the European Social Fund.

Breaking down the above data by policy area, it emerges that financial resources provided by the EU were used in all the projects on Roma inclusion in our sample, and in five (out of seven) initiatives concerning labour market activation. None of the Housing First case studies made use of these resources. With respect to Housing First, however, it should be noted that the promoters of the Italian

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<sup>27</sup> Case studies no. 2, 4, 9, 11 and, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Case studies no. 2, 4, 11, 12, and 13.

project *Tutti a casa* made an attempt to convince the municipality to apply for PROGRESS funds (without success, though). EU-related cognitive resources were used in the four Roma inclusion case studies and in half of the case studies related to Housing First, while the usage of such resources was explicitly mentioned in only two of the case studies concerning labour market activation. The exploitation of networking opportunities is less frequent, and has been mentioned in only five cases (two on Roma inclusion, one on Housing First, and two cases concerning labour market activation). Similarly, the opportunity to gain greater visibility was mentioned in two cases concerning Roma inclusion and three cases related to labour market activation.

Looking at the cases where EU resources were not used, the specific features of the *Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment* in Ghent, which started as an occupation of the monastery by a group of squatters, have been put forward as the main reason why applying for EU resources was not an option. In two other cases – *Camden Housing First* and *Housing First Stockholm* – the promoters did not apply for EU funds because of the availability of public resources and the political willingness to use them for these projects. Furthermore, in the latter case, the fact that Sweden was seen as an advanced welfare system limited the willingness to engage in EU projects, since the possibility of finding potentially useful ideas and examples in other states was considered somewhat limited<sup>29</sup>. EU resources were not used for the Belgian project *De Kringwinkel* or the British *Furniture Reuse Network*. However, and interestingly enough, in both cases the EU legislation on recycling and waste management was considered an important factor for the institutionalization and up-scaling of those initiatives.

**Table 2. Case studies by kind of EU resources used (if any)**

	Case study	None	Financial	Cognitive	Networking	Visibility
1	Thara (AT)		ESF (EQUAL)	X		
2	Ánde Škola (Alteramente) (IT)		ESF	X	X	X
3	MigRom (UK)		FP7	X		
4	Romane Buca in Sundbyberg (SE)		ESF	X	X	X
5	The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment (BE)	X				
6	Camden Housing First (UK)	X				
7	Tutti a casa (All at home) (IT)			X		
8	Housing First Stockholm (SE)	X				
9	Housing First Vienna (AT)			X	X	
10	Ten For Cooking (BE)		ESF			
11	Inspire! NEET programme (UK)		ESF	X	X	X
12	Rätt Steg (Right Step) (SE)		ESF	X	X	X
13	Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support) (SE)		ERF			X
14	ERfA - Sewing Workshop (AT)		ESF			
15	De Kringwinkel (BE)	X				
16	Furniture Reuse Network (UK)	X				

<sup>29</sup> In other Work Package 11 case studies not included in the present report, access to EU resources was not considered an option because the promoters had the feeling that the topics of their projects (notably, over indebtedness and financial education and the setting-up of local networks to combat poverty) were not addressed by EU programmes.

TOT		5	9	8	5	5
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Source: authors' elaboration from the Work Package 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

#### **4.2 Supporting what? The role of EU resources in the development of local socially innovative initiatives**

In this Section, we consider the eleven projects in our sample which made use of EU resources in order to assess: a) at what stage they made use of them; and b) to what extent their existence is linked to the availability of those resources.

As for the first aspect, we distinguish between four options:

- *conception and design*, i.e. EU resources were used in elaborating and designing the project (e.g. as a source of inspiration);
- *start-up and initial phase*, i.e. EU resources were used in order to launch the project (which implies that the project then continued to be implemented without them);
- *whole project*, i.e. the project is still on-going (and it still relies on EU resources) or it was discontinued after the expiration of EU resources;
- *up-scaling*, i.e. EU resources were used in order to broaden (up-scale) the project.

As emerges from Table 3, in three cases (*Thara*, *Tutti a casa* and *Housing First Vienna*), EU resources – notably, cognitive resources – were used to design the projects. Indeed, as already briefly mentioned in Section 4.1, in both the Italian project *Tutti a casa* and *Housing First Vienna* national actors used knowledge produced in the EU context (or through EU-funded activities) in the process of designing their own initiatives. For instance, in the case of the Italian initiative, the analysis of reports and studies on similar projects produced in the framework of EU funded initiatives implemented abroad represented the first step for setting-up the *Tutti a casa* project. In the view of the initiator of that initiative, attention towards knowledge creation and dissemination (“identifying good practices, studying them and then try to transfer those practices in other contexts”) represents the added value of European programmes, in particular PROGRESS. The findings of a PROGRESS funded European pilot project on Housing First were the starting point for the development of the *Housing First Vienna*. In the case of the Austrian initiative *Thara*, the origin of the project dates back to the end of the 1990s/early 2000s when the EU Anti-Discrimination Directive was enacted and topics related to discrimination were included in the activities of the EQUAL programme. These cognitive and financial resources were used by national actors within the Federal Ministry of Labour in order to set up the framework for initiatives such as *Thara*, which, as we shall discuss below, were at odds with the established Austrian approach towards Roma inclusion.

In five cases<sup>30</sup>, EU resources – more particularly financial resources – were used in order to launch the projects and to implement them during their early stages: once the co-funding period expired, these projects continued, relying on other funding sources. In four cases<sup>31</sup>, EU co-funded projects are still on-going and EU resources are being used to implement the initiatives. Obviously, in the implementation

<sup>30</sup> Case studies no. 1, 2, 12, 13, and 14.

<sup>31</sup> Case studies no. 3, 4, 10, and 11.

of these initiatives EU resources were used for a number of purposes, ranging from covering the costs of the activities carried out and staff costs to funding evaluations of the projects, dissemination activities or participation in networking/information exchange activities. It is not possible to give a full account of those usages here<sup>32</sup>.

Interestingly enough, in none of the case studies included in our sample were EU resources used in order to up-scale the socially innovative initiative, a finding which is somehow at odds with the objective of the EU funds (in particular, the ESF) to facilitate the up-scaling of small-size successful projects.

**Table 3. Usage of EU resources: stage of the project**

	Case study	Conception and design	Start-up/ initial phase	Whole project	Up-scaling	Existence without
1	Thara (AT)	X	X			Unlikely
2	Ánde Škola (Alteramente) (IT)		X			Unlikely
3	MigRom (UK)			X		Unlikely
4	Romane Buca in Sundbyberg (SE)			X		Unlikely
7	Tutti a casa (All at home) (IT)	X				
9	Housing First Vienna (AT)	X				
10	Ten for Cooking (BE)			X		Unlikely
11	Inspire! NEET programme (UK)			X		Unlikely
12	Rätt Steg (Right Step)(SE)		X			Unlikely
13	Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support) (SE)		X			Unlikely
14	ERfA - Sewing Workshop (AT)		X			Unlikely
TOT	11	3	5	4	0	

Source: authors' elaboration from the WP 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

Irrespective of the stage in which EU resources have been used, the question arises to what extent were these resources important in bringing the socially innovative project about? It emerges from our research (Table 3) that in nine cases the people responsible for the implementation of the initiative deemed it “unlikely” that the project would have been implemented without the availability of EU resources: this represents the vast majority of the projects using EU resources included in our sample. The importance of EU resources – in these cases, financial resources – for the very existence of the initiative is particularly evident in the projects related to Roma inclusion (four out of four) and labour market activation (five out of five). Two reasons – sometimes interrelated – have been highlighted:

1) EU resources allowed actors to overcome difficulties in getting enough domestic funds to implement the project (e.g. *MigRom*, *Ánde Škola*, and *Inspire! NEET programme*). In both the British

<sup>32</sup> For more information on this aspect, cf. the case studies reports.

initiatives *MigRom* and *Inspire! NEET programme* the promoters of the projects explicitly stated that EU resources were fundamental to counterbalance public budget cuts entailing, respectively, a curtailment of outreach activities targeted at Roma people (in Manchester) and of services for the NEETs (in England). In the Belgian project *Ten for Cooking* as well as the English initiative *Inspire!NEET programme* the fact that EU resources ensure funding for the projects over the medium-term (i.e. about three years) was pointed to as one of their added values<sup>33</sup>. In the case of the Italian initiative *Ánde Škola*, Apulia Region's resources linked to the ESF were necessary for the existence of the project, in the sense that they were used (*inter alia*) to create the association implementing the initiative.

2) EU resources allowed domestic actors to introduce new policy frames challenging existing policy approaches (e.g. *Thara* and *Romane Buca*) or to experiment with new policy instruments (e.g. *Sprakstodjande insatser*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Ten for Cooking*). In these cases, we can find some evidence of what we referred to as strategic use of EU resources or leverage effect (cf. Section 2.1 and Section 5 for a more in-depth discussion): domestic actors have strategically used EU resources in order to innovate in the domestic policy context, sometimes overcoming (or attempting to overcome) resistance from other actors.

In the two cases related to Roma inclusion – *Thara* (Austria) and *Romane Buca* (Sweden) – the availability of EU financial, cognitive and legal resources allowed domestic actors to challenge mainstream approaches that were not in favour of affirmative action targeted at ethnic minorities. In the case of *Thara*, actors on the ground (including civil servants in the Federal Ministry of Labour, civil society organizations and Roma associations) were particularly skilful in exploiting EU policies on anti-discrimination and EU funding as a window of opportunity for advancing innovative (read, targeted) approaches for the social inclusion of Roma people. Similarly, in the case of *Romane Buca*, without the availability of EU co-funding, a project explicitly targeted at Roma people would probably not have been supported by local welfare services, which traditionally work on the basis of the principle of equal treatment for every citizen. The resistance encountered by the Sundbyberg Folk High School in getting municipal support for its project on Roma inclusion is telling in this respect. The first attempt to get public support for accessing EU funds failed due to the refusal by the municipality, which opposed the idea of adapting services and provisions to specific ethnic groups. Due to pressure from the mass media and the subsequent intervention of national level organisations (including the Swedish Employment Service and the ESF Council), the project was included in the ESF funded initiative *Romane Buca* only at a later stage.

In three of the cases related to labour market activation (*Sprakstodjande insatser*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Ten for Cooking*), EU resources were not used to implement projects entailing major shifts from established policy frames, such as social investment. EU funds were rather used to experiment with new methods and introduce new instruments in the field of labour market activation, with a view to convincing the decision-makers of their effectiveness. Such a dynamic clearly emerges from the project *Ten for Cooking*. Indeed, the approach adopted in this project does not depart significantly from mainstream

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<sup>33</sup> This said, some financial shortcomings related to EU resources emerged from other case studies. In the case of *Thara*, the fact that funding was provided on an annual basis and the organisation had to provide money upfront for the costs incurred has been deemed very problematic. In the case of *Ánde Škola*, the need to provide a financial guarantee before accessing the funds was a remarkable challenge (such a circumstance, however, may be very case-specific).

labour market activation and social investment approaches. Within these policy frameworks, ESF resources were primarily used to experiment with new ways of providing services, thus proving their value to political élites at the local level. In the case of the Swedish initiatives *Sprakstodjande insatser* and *Rätt Steg*, resources from the European Refugee Fund and the European Social Fund allowed local actors to try out innovative working methods for the integration of refugees and immigrant newcomers and to disseminate the knowledge developed. Whether these experiments would have taken place without the initial support of the EU funds was called into question by the promoters of the initiatives.

In the case of the Austrian *ERfA-Sewing Workshop* initiative, ESF requirements in relation to partnership and gender mainstreaming were considered as fundamental in shaping the structure of the initiative. Because they did not comply with ESF requirements in terms of gender mainstreaming, ERfA (the association behind the project) had an incentive to collaborate with SOMM (a self-organized association of immigrant and Muslim women) as the latter had access to unemployed women who would fit the requirements of the ESF call. The importance of the ESF requirements in shaping the governance arrangements of the initiative is confirmed by the fact that the end of the ESF co-funding period entailed some major organisational changes to the project, including the end of the collaboration with SOMM.

EU-related cognitive resources used in the two Housing First projects *Tutti a casa* and *Housing First Vienna* were deemed important but not essential for the existence of the projects. In the latter case, however, EU level initiatives and studies – in particular, the PROGRESS funded pilot project HFE – significantly contributed to the introduction of the *Housing First* approach in the city of Vienna. These activities contributed to the dissemination in the Viennese context of knowledge about such an approach and of evidence about its effectiveness. Local actors supporting the Housing First approach (the Fonds Soziales<sup>34</sup> Wien, the Neunerhaus, and the Green Party) eventually used these studies and experiences in their advocacy activities. Indeed, the genesis of the Housing First pilot project in Vienna is particularly useful to illustrate multi-level dynamics involving the European and local levels. As emerges from this case study, another Housing First project – Wohnbasis – implemented by the Fonds Soziales Wien was Vienna's contribution to the EU-funded project on Housing First. When, in 2010, the Viennese Greens succeeded in introducing the idea of the Housing First approach into the coalition agreement with the Social Democrats, it was explicitly stated that concrete ideas for the implementation of the approach had to be drawn from that European project HFE. These experiences – together with other local experiences – flowed into the pilot project started by Neunerhaus in 2012 and were enriched by further contacts with foreign experts and FEANTSA. Overall, as was the case for the projects *Thara* and *Romane Buca* described above, EU resources were to a large extent used by local actors as a sort of leverage to legitimise the Housing First approach and to challenge competing approaches.

### **4.3 Institutionalization dynamics and future perspectives**

Interestingly enough, most of the projects for which the availability of EU resources was considered essential for their realisation have later been 'institutionalized'. After the end of the EU co-funding

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<sup>34</sup> An outsourced organisation of the city of Vienna dealing with homeless people

period, their implementation has in fact continued either because they have been mainstreamed into ordinary public policy and rely on domestic public budgets (*Thara*, *Rätt Steg*, *Sprakstodjande insatser*, *ERfA- Sewing Workshop*) or because they continue to rely on other financial sources (*Ánde Škola*) (Table 4). However, different degrees of institutionalization can be detected and, in some cases, mainstreaming into ordinary public policy has entailed changes in key features of the projects.

The *Sprakstodjande insatser* project is the initiative where the institutionalization process proved to be most robust, also entailing some up-scaling. After the experimental phase co-funded by the European Refugee Fund, the project has been mainstreamed into the activities of the Municipality of Stockholm: it is now funded through the budget of the municipality and it is a regular service provided to all newcomers and unemployed immigrants. As pointed out in the case study report, the pathway of institutionalization was not easy and entailed a complex process of transformation, since municipal services had to readapt their tasks to the new formal procedures and requests. According to the interviewees, planning upfront a rigorous final evaluation of the project was key to facilitating institutionalization, since this made it possible to demonstrate the effectiveness of the project and to gain political attention and support for its continuation.

In other cases (*Rätt Steg*, *Thara*, and *ERfA- Sewing Workshop*), institutionalization processes did not entail any up-scaling of the initiative (or a very limited up-scaling). As was the case for the *Sprakstodjande insatser* project, *Rätt Steg* is now implemented by the Municipality of Stockholm through its own budget, and the newly introduced teaching and training methods have been included in the ordinary activities of the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) service. However, these methods are actually implemented only in a single SFI school, and the possibility of up-scaling them by involving other schools is still under discussion. Similarly, the *ERfA-Sewing Workshop* project has now been institutionalized and has become a stable programme implemented by ERfA. Despite the fact that funding from the Graz social welfare office is only assured on a yearly basis, the feeling of the promoters of the project is that it will continue in the midterm. However, despite some attempts in that direction and the opening up of the initiative to women without a migratory background (from 2012), further up-scaling or diffusion of the project are not on the agenda. The *Thara* project has also been institutionalized and, since 2007, it has been financed by the Ministry of Labour on an annual project basis. Its future, however, is largely uncertain. On the one hand, up-scaling in other provinces is still under study; on the other hand the opportunity to fully mainstream the approach by transforming it into a regular programme implemented by the Public Employment Service has been somehow missed, due to persistent resistance against the provision of targeted services to ethnic minorities.

Finally, the institutionalization of the Italian initiative *Ánde Škola* proved to be highly precarious and did not entail mainstreaming into public policies nor any up-scaling of the project. After the expiration of the EU co-funding period, and despite the recognition of the value of the initiative, the main public institutions involved in the project (state schools and the municipality) were not willing to finance its follow up. As a consequence, the project has continued to be implemented in a reduced version and by relying on online crowdfunding campaigns and the introduction of a small user charge.



**Table 4. Institutionalization of EU-supported socially innovative initiatives and future perspectives**

	Case study	Existence without	Institutionalization after EU funding period	Future use of EU financial resources
1	Thara (AT)	Unlikely	YES	YES (for up-scaling)
2	Ánde Škola (Alteramente) (IT)	Unlikely	YES (very precarious)	YES (to continue the project)
3	MigRom (UK)	Unlikely	On-going	Possibly YES
4	Romane Buca in Sundbyberg (SE)	Unlikely	On-going	n.a.
7	Tutti a casa (All at home) (IT)		Not relevant (EU financial resources not used)	Yes (for up-scaling)
9	Housing First Vienna (AT)		Not relevant (EU financial resources not used)	YES (for a follow-up project)
10	Ten for Cooking (BE)	Unlikely	On-going	No (searching for own resources)
11	Inspire! NEET programme (UK)	Unlikely	On-going	YES (for follow-up projects)
12	Rätt Steg (Right Step) (SE)	Unlikely	YES	NO (own resources used)
13	Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support) (SE)	Unlikely	YES	NO (own resources used)
14	ERfA-Sewing Workshop (AT)	Unlikely	YES	NO (but attempt made)

Source: authors' elaboration from the Work Package 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

What do different actors think about the possibility of using EU resources in the future? From the interviews conducted, different perspectives emerge, which partly reflect the specific challenges deriving from the various degrees of institutionalization of the projects. In the cases of the Swedish projects *Rätt Steg* and *Sprakstodjande insatser*, the promoters do not plan any further usage of EU financial resources in the future. The same applies to the Austrian *ERfA-Sewing Workshop* project, even though they applied for ESF resources after the expiration of the EU funding period (which did not succeed). In the case of the Austrian initiative *Thara*, further recourse to EU funds has been envisaged in order to up-scale the project by extending it to other Austrian provinces, an aspect which proved to be particularly challenging (see above). Conversely, given its very precarious level of institutionalization, the possibility of accessing EU funds again appears fundamental to the very survival of the socially innovative Italian initiative *Ánde Škola*.

Looking at the projects for which the availability of EU funds was considered essential but where the EU funding period is still on-going (*MigRom*, *Ten for Cooking*, and the *Inspire! NEET programme*), the intentions for the future are varied. As for *Ten for Cooking*, there is a willingness to continue the initiatives, exclusively relying on domestic funds: the organisers appear confident that the three-year experiment co-funded by the ESF will be useful to convince the political level as to the effectiveness of the approach adopted, thus ensuring that the necessary funding goes ahead. As for *MigRom*, a more complex picture emerges. On the one hand, the project represents an attempt to build up and institutionalize links between the Roma community and the City Council; according to the

representative of the Manchester City Council involved in the Roma engagement activities, the Council might support such activities in the future. On the other hand, partly due to some political tension on the issue of Roma inclusion, the most likely scenario is that the project will be continued mostly relying on private resources. In any case, the promoters of the initiative appear interested in using EU resources to continue the project in the future, if available. The *NEET programme* implemented by the association *Inspire!* will not be replicated after the expiration of EU funds. However the association will apply again for ESF support for other projects targeted at the NEET and, in doing so, much of the expertise, networks and activities of the *NEET programme* will be exploited.

In two of the cases included in our sample (*Tutti a casa* and *Housing First Vienna*) cognitive resources provided by the EU were used. Although these resources were considered important for the design of the initiative (providing useful inspiration), they were not deemed as essential. In both these cases, however, the promoters of the initiatives envisage access to EU resources (notably, financial resources) in the future. As for *Tutti a casa*, the project has been institutionalized and, for 2014, the Municipality of Bologna has decided to endow it with public resources. According to the promoters of the project, EU resources may be used in the future in order to further develop and up-scale the initiative<sup>35</sup>. In the case of *Housing First Vienna*, knowledge of the Housing First approach developed at the EU level was deemed extremely important for the design of the initiative under review. The latter is still on-going and it is expected that, after its evaluation, it will be fully mainstreamed into the policies of the municipality receiving public funds. However, the promoters of the initiative do not exclude further recourse to EU resources for developing follow-up projects.

#### **4.4 Leading organisations and support received in dealing with EU resources**

The aim of this Section is to investigate whether the organisations responsible for the implementation of the socially innovative projects included in our sample were provided with any kind of support in using EU resources and, if so, by whom. We will first identify the lead organisations of each initiative, paying particular attention to the possible involvement of public authorities in the partnership (besides a mere financing role). Indeed, one could hypothesise that partnerships involving public authorities may find it easier to access and manage EU resources, insofar as they have better access to public bodies responsible for the management of EU funds or can rely on internal resources devoted hereto. Second, we will describe the kind of support received by the promoters of the initiatives; we distinguish here between support actually received in dealing with EU resources in the past and support expected in the future. Finally we will discuss both the effectiveness and the limits of support provided by public bodies.

Socially innovative initiatives often rely on the creation of partnerships including a variety of actors such as public, private and third sector organisations, and this is often part of their innovative character. This is also the case for the initiatives included in our sample, which generally relied on partnerships involving different kinds of organisations, mostly NGOs and public authorities. However, the roles of the different partners vary. When looking at the organisations which lead the partnerships

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<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, it should be noted that, in view of the launch of the *Tutti a casa* project, the promoters had already tried to convince the Municipality to apply for PROGRESS funding (without succeeding however).

(Table 5), NGOs prevail, leading five<sup>36</sup> out of the sixteen projects considered in the present analysis (five out of the eleven making use of EU resources). In three cases (two of which make use of EU resources) leading responsibilities were shared between public authorities and NGOs (*Romane Buca*, *Housing First Vienna*, and *Camden Housing First*), while in four cases<sup>37</sup> (three of which make use of EU resources) public authorities – generally at the municipal level – were the leading actors of the initiatives. In two case studies (*De Kringwinkel* and the *Furniture Reuse Network*), the leading role was played by social enterprises. In the case of the *MigRom* project, the lead partner was a University. The *Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment* in Ghent, finally, was a rather atypical initiative compared to the others in our sample, because it was led by a varied group of actors (including anarchist squatters, activists, social and socio-artistic organisations); some of them joined in the Right to Housing Movement<sup>38</sup> to take the lead in coordinating the project. Overall, it should be noted that public authorities (typically local public services) have been involved in the implementation of the vast majority of the projects considered (fourteen out of sixteen) and in the totality of the cases where some usage was made of EU resources. The features and level of their involvement, however, obviously vary depending on the specific case.

Considering the cases from the point of view of the policy areas and countries provides interesting insights. With respect to the policy area aspect, two of the four projects concerning Roma inclusion were led by NGOs (*Thara* and *Ánde Škola*), while one project was led by a public service jointly with an NGO (*Romane Buca*) and the last one by a University (*MigRom*). As for Housing First, in one case the project was led by social NGOs (*Tutti a casa*), in one case by a public service (*Housing First Stockholm*) and in two cases the leadership was shared between public services and NGOs (*Housing First in Vienna* and *Camden Housing First*)<sup>39</sup>. In the field of labour market activation, our sample is almost equally distributed between projects led by public bodies (*Ten for Cooking*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Sprakstodjande insatser*), by NGOs (*Inspire! NEET programme*, and *ERfA-Sewing Workshop*) and social enterprises (*De Kringwinkle* and *Furniture Reuse Network*).

Looking at the countries where the initiatives have been implemented, the role of public services in leading socially innovative projects appears particularly significant in Sweden. Out of the four Swedish projects analysed, three were led by public services and one by a public service and an NGO. A mixed situation emerges in Belgium, where the cases in our sample are equally distributed between projects led by public services, social enterprises and other kinds of actors (one for each category). In Austria, two out of three projects were led by NGOs and, in one case, an NGO and a public authority shared responsibility for the initiative. Interestingly enough, none of the initiatives implemented in Italy and in the UK were led by public authorities alone. In the former country, the two initiatives considered were led by NGOs, while in the UK one project was run by an NGO, one by a social enterprise, one by

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<sup>36</sup> Case studies no. 1, 2, 7, 11, and 14.

<sup>37</sup> Case studies no. 8, 10, 12, and 13.

<sup>38</sup> The latter is an unincorporated organisation made up of an atypical and ideologically diverse coalition of third sector organisations.

<sup>39</sup> As already mentioned above, the fifth Housing First case in our sample – the *Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment* in Ghent – is rather atypical.

a University, and, in one case, the leadership was taken by an NGO in collaboration with a public authority<sup>40</sup>.

**Table 5. Leading organisations**

	Case study	Public authority	NGO	Social enterprise	Other	Involvement of public authorities
1	<b>Thara (AT)</b>		X			Yes
2	<b>Ánde Škola (Alteramente) (IT)</b>		X			Yes
3	<b>MigRom (UK)</b>				X	Yes
4	<b>Romane Buca in Sundbyberg (SE)</b>	X	X			Yes
5	The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment (BE)				X	No
6	Camden Housing First (UK)	X	X			Yes
7	<b>Tutti a casa (All at home) (IT)</b>		X			Yes
8	Housing First Stockholm (SE)	X				Yes
9	<b>Housing First Vienna (AT)</b>	X	X			Yes
10	<b>Ten For Cooking (BE)</b>	X				Yes
11	<b>Inspire! NEET programme (UK)</b>		X			Yes
12	<b>Rätt Steg (Right Step) (SE)</b>	X				Yes
13	<b>Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support) (SE)</b>	X				Yes
14	<b>ERfA-Sewing Workshop (AT)</b>		X			Yes
15	De Kringwinkel (BE)			X		Yes
16	Furniture Reuse Network (UK)			X		No

Source: authors' elaboration from the Work Package 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

Note: in bold, initiatives making use of EU resources.

One of the aims of the present analysis is to understand to what extent the organisations implementing socially innovative projects are supported in using EU resources and by whom. Accordingly, people involved in those initiatives were asked to indicate who supported them in dealing with EU resources (i.e. getting information on their availability, applying for them, managing financial resources) or who they would contact in case they had to deal with EU resources in the future<sup>41</sup>. Four options were proposed (Table 6): support in dealing with EU resources may have been provided by a) public bodies; b) internal resources tasked with the management of EU funds or c) external resources/consultancies; d) by relying on the experience of other partners involved in the project.

In the majority of our cases (eight), support was provided – or our respondents expected that it would be provided – by administrative bodies<sup>42</sup>. These include both public organisations explicitly tasked with

<sup>40</sup> Overall, these findings appear rather consistent with the specific social innovation patterns characterising the various welfare regimes hypothesised by Kazepov *et al.* (2013) (cf. Section 2.1).

<sup>41</sup> In this case, we mainly refer to support in dealing with financial resources. In some cases, interviewees have indicated more than one option.

<sup>42</sup> In the projects *Romane Buca*, *Ten for Cooking*, *Inspire! NEET programme*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Sprakstodjande insatser*, people involved in the initiatives get in contact with public bodies to receive support in

the management of EU funds (such as, for instance, the Swedish ESF Council, the ESF cell within the Belgian Public Federal Service-Social Integration, the Swedish office of the European Refugee Fund) or other administrative offices at both the national and local level (e.g. the English Skills Funding Agency in the case of the project *Inspire! NEET programme*, or the ESF offices in the Municipality of Stockholm in the case of the initiatives *Rätt Steg* and *Sprakstodjande insatser*). There seems to be an equal expectation of future support from administrative bodies among people involved in projects led by public authorities and by NGOs.

In seven cases (*Ánde Škola*, *MigRom*, *Ten for Cooking*, *Inspire! NEET programme*, *ERfA-Sewing Workshop*), the organisations implementing a socially innovative project relied on– or are willing to develop (*Housing First Stockholm*) – internal expertise to deal with EU resources. This attitude seems less common among public services than among NGOs, although, especially for small NGOs, such an option would be particularly complicated and may be a reaction to the lack of public support (as becomes clear, in particular, in the Italian project *Ánde Škola* and the Austrian initiative *ERfA-Sewing Workshop*). However, in the only case where a public service leading one of these initiatives decided to appoint staff specialised in the management of EU resources, this strategy proved to be rather successful. This was the case of the Public centre for social action (PCSA) in Leuven implementing the project *Ten for Cooking*, where the availability of specialised staff (instead of giving social workers this task, as was the case in other Belgian PCSAs) may have contributed to the relatively high score of the PCSA Leuven in getting involved in ESF-funded projects.

In three cases support was provided (*Inspire! NEET programme*) or would be provided (*Housing First Vienna* and *Furniture Reuse Network*) by other partners involved in the projects.

Finally, only in two cases (*Ánde Škola* and *Tutti a casa*) respondents expressed their intention to rely on external expertise and consultancies if involved in EU funded projects in the future. Here again, this option is considered rather expensive by small NGOs (see, for instance, the case of the Italian association *Alteramente* implementing the project *Ánde Škola*).

Sorting the information above according to the country of the respondents provides interesting insights. It emerges that the promoters of all the initiatives implemented in Sweden have been (or would be) supported by some kind of public bodies while dealing with EU resources. Conversely, the promoters of the two socially innovative initiatives implemented in Italy would rely on external consultants if they decided to apply for EU funding in the future. The situation in the other three countries appears more balanced. In both Austria and the UK, an equal number of respondents stated that support was (or would be) provided by public administrations, internal resources, or other partners. As for Belgium, we gathered information on this point only for one case study (*Ten for Cooking*). Respondents involved in that project claimed they resorted to public bodies, internal resources and the experience of other partners.

Overall, public bodies are the main reference points for getting support in accessing and managing EU funds. At the same time, however, the effectiveness of public support has been questioned in a

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accessing/using EU resources. In the case of the projects *Housing First Stockholm*, *Housing First Vienna* and *Furniture Reuse Network*, our respondents expect to be able to rely on the support of public bodies in the future.

number of cases<sup>43</sup>. Indeed, some of our respondents complained about a lack of communication with public offices or delays in receiving information. In other cases, guidelines received were inconsistent or unclear.

Administrative procedures linked to EU funds are often seen as overly complex and as extremely time-consuming<sup>44</sup>. Having adequate support in accessing and managing these resources would be extremely helpful in overcoming these shortcomings. The administrative complexity and lack of support represents a disadvantage especially for small NGOs, for whom developing internal expertise specialised in dealing with EU funds or resorting to external expertise may be particularly difficult and expensive. These shortcomings were particularly evident in the Italian case *Ánde Škola* and the Austrian initiative *ERfA-Sewing Workshop*. In both cases there was little or no specific internal expertise, hence the staff of the NGOs implementing the projects had to deal with the management of the procedures related to EU funds. In the case of the Italian association *Alteramente* this was possible because the procedures for applying to the ESF co-funded initiative *Principi Attivi* were not excessively demanding, so the NGO was able to write the proposal by itself. However, as expressed in our interviews, the members of the association would not be able to deal with other calls for tenders/proposals financed by European funds on their own, so they 'resigned' and turned to an expert in European projects in order to find relevant calls for tenders and for writing the applications. Similar shortcomings in the limited public support offered to NGOs also emerge from the Austrian case studies *ERfA-Sewing Workshop* and *Thara*. Our respondents here stressed that the administrative burden for access to EU funds is too great for small organisations. Consequently, the latter are often obliged either to associate with bigger players or to give up the idea.

The lack of adequate support and the complexity of procedures related to EU funds also determine a sort of incumbents' advantage in accessing these resources. Sometimes, national contexts appear rather 'locked' insofar as EU funds are accessed by a number of well-established, big and strong organisations able to develop expertise and experience in dealing with these resources. Conversely, it is harder for smaller organisations to develop such expertise. Evidence of this incumbents' advantage clearly emerges from the Italian case study *Tutti a casa*, but this tendency is also confirmed by other case studies such as *Ten for Cooking*, *Inspire! NEET programme*, and *Rätt Steg*.

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<sup>43</sup> Case studies no. 2, 4, 10, 13, and 14.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. case studies no. 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14.

**Table 6. Support in dealing with EU resources**

	Case study	Administrative bodies	Consultancy/external experts	Internal resources	Other partners
1	<b>Thara (AT)</b>				
2	<b>Ánde Škola (Alteramente) (IT)</b>		•	X	
3	<b>MigRom (UK)</b>			X	
4	<b>Romane Buca in Sundbyberg (SE)</b>	X			
5	The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment (BE)				
6	Camden Housing First (UK)				
7	<b>Tutti a casa (All at home) (IT)</b>		•		
8	Housing First Stockholm (SE)	•		•	
9	<b>Housing First Vienna (AT)</b>	•			•
10	<b>Ten For Cooking (BE)</b>	X		X	
11	<b>Inspire! NEET programme (UK)</b>	X		X	X
12	<b>Rätt Steg (Right Step) (SE)</b>	X			
13	<b>Sprakstodjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support) (SE)</b>	X			
14	<b>ERfA- Sewing Workshop (AT)</b>			X	
15	De Kringwinkel (BE)				
16	Furniture Reuse Network (UK)	•			•

Source: authors' elaboration from the Work Package 11 reports and follow-up questionnaires.

Note: X = kind of support actually used; • = future intention. Initiatives which made use of EU resources in bold.

## 5. The leverage effect of EU resources and welfare regimes' peculiarities

As pointed out in Section 2.1, two aspects related to the usage of EU resources in local socially innovative initiatives appear particularly interesting for the present analysis: 1) the possible strategic usage of EU resources for social innovation by domestic actors (the so called leverage effect); and 2) the presence of any peculiarity in exploiting EU resources for social innovation characterising different welfare regimes.

As for the former aspect, evidence of a strategic usage of EU resources in order to develop innovative domestic policies emerged in particular from six of the case studies included in our sample (cf. Section 4.2): *Thara*, *Romane Buca*, *Housing First Vienna*, *Sprakstodjande insatser*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Ten for Cooking*.

As for the former three cases, dealing with Roma inclusion and Housing First, innovation at the domestic level supported by EU resources mainly concerned the introduction of new policy frames and policy approaches to deal with the target groups of the initiatives. In these cases, the availability of cognitive resources appears particularly important to achieve such an outcome, insofar as they were used in all the three socially innovative projects. As for *Thara* and *Romane Buca*, the availability of EU

cognitive, legal and financial resources allowed actors on the ground to implement those projects. Without European resources, implementation would have been extremely difficult due to domestic resistance against approaches targeted towards ethnic minorities and positive discrimination actions, both in Austria and Sweden. In the case of *Housing First Vienna*, domestic actors were particularly able in exploiting cognitive resources developed at the EU level in order to lobby for the setting up of a Housing First experiment in Vienna.

In the latter three cases (*Sprakstodjande insatser*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Ten for Cooking*), the leverage effect of EU resources basically consisted in the introduction of new instruments and methods, without really challenging mainstream policy approaches. This may be related to the fact that the three projects concerned labour market activation, a policy area where approaches based on the activation paradigm appear well-entrenched in EU Member States. Instead of explicitly challenging the mainstream policy approach, local actors therefore tried to innovate by experimenting with new methods and services. In these cases, the availability of financial resources provided by the EU was essential to conduct these experiments, with a view to convincing decision-makers of their effectiveness.

Interestingly enough, the role of public authorities in the initiatives above seems to be crucial and, in most cases, civil servants acted as policy entrepreneurs strategically pushing for experimentation with innovative approaches and methods (e.g. *Thara*, *Housing First Vienna*, *Sprakstodjande insatser*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Ten for Cooking*). Indeed, in five of the six cases listed above, public authorities played a leading role in the partnerships implementing the projects<sup>45</sup>. In most cases, the promoters of the initiatives also received some kind of support in dealing with EU resources from public bodies charged with this task. However, as reported in Section 4.4, the quality of the support received has often been questioned.

In the cases above, EU resources were strategically used to introduce socially innovative projects at the local level. It is not clear, however, how strong the leverage effect of these EU resources is. In particular, two questions arise. To what extent have projects been institutionalized in the respective policy contexts? Have projects been up-scaled beyond the local contexts where they were launched? Giving an answer to these questions is not possible for three of the six projects in which the usage of EU resources entailed some leverage effect (*Romane Buca*, *Ten for Cooking* and *Housing First Vienna*) since they are still at an early stage. In fact, both the initiatives *Romane Buca* and *Ten for Cooking* are still co-funded by the ESF, while decisions about the institutionalization of *Housing First Vienna* will be taken only after the end of the pilot project and its evaluation. In the case of *Thara*, *Sprakstodjande insatser*, and *Rätt Steg*, the initiatives have been mainstreamed into public policies implemented in Vienna and Stockholm after the expiration of the EU co-funding period. Up-scaling dynamics are very limited, however. Besides an extension of the population covered by the initiative *Sprakstodjande insatser*, none of the three cases show evidence of any further extension of the initiatives beyond the local level.

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<sup>45</sup> The exception is *Thara*, where the leading organisation was an NGO. However, also in this case there was some involvement of public authorities in the design and the implementation of the project. Furthermore, as emerges from the case study report, the activism of a civil servant in the Federal Labour Ministry was crucial for exploiting the ESF guidelines (in 2000) as a window of opportunity for introducing a more open approach to the labour market integration of marginalised groups, in a political context characterised by a certain lack of interest.



When it comes to possible country peculiarities in using EU resources for social innovation, and the ways in which countries belonging to the different welfare regimes integrate these resources into domestic social innovation patterns, our sample is too limited to allow any generalisation<sup>46</sup>. Nevertheless, we can provide some preliminary observations.

Looking at the three Swedish case studies, the usage of EU resources seems to be fully integrated into the ‘supported social innovation’ pattern characterising Universalistic welfare regimes. Public authorities play a crucial role in leading the socially innovative projects supported by EU resources, and public bodies are the main providers of support in dealing with these resources. In such a context, EU resources are used in order to experiment with new policy instruments and working methods or to introduce new policy approaches challenging existing ones. Successful experiments are fairly systematically mainstreamed into public policies, and some limited up-scaling can be detected<sup>47</sup>. In the Swedish cases, the institutionalization of the socially innovative projects closes the cycle of usage of EU resources, insofar as no further recourse to those resources is foreseen.

Compared with the Swedish case, partnerships characterising EU-supported socially innovative initiatives implemented in Corporatist-conservative welfare regimes (Austria and Belgium) are more varied. While public authorities still play a role, NGOs seem more likely to take the lead for these initiatives, at least in Austria<sup>48</sup>. In both these countries, support in dealing with EU resources is provided by public bodies, though the quality of this support has been sometimes questioned. In addition, other sources (e.g., internal resources, external consultancies, and other partners’ experience) appear important. Similarly to the Swedish case, EU resources in Austria and Belgium are used in order to experiment with new policy instruments and working methods or to introduce new policy approaches challenging existing ones. With respect to diversity and intercultural learning, these initiatives make an important contribution to reorienting corporatist welfare regimes and their approaches to citizenship. Moreover, the degree of institutionalization of the projects appears rather high, though up-scaling is limited. Differently to the Swedish case, however, in Austria the institutionalization of EU supported projects does not close the cycle of usage of EU resources. Indeed, local actors still consider these resources for future usages such as up-scaling the initiative (*Thara*), implementing follow-up projects (*Housing First Vienna*), or continuing the implementation of the project (ERfA-Sewing Workshop<sup>49</sup>). As for the Belgian project *Ten for Cooking*, the institutionalization dynamics are uncertain, since the ESF co-funded project is still on-going. However, the promoters of the project are

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<sup>46</sup> Looking at the projects which made some usage of EU resources (cf. Tables 1 and 2), we can only rely on three cases for Sweden (*Romane Buca*, *Rätt Steg*, and *Sprakstodjande insatser*), three cases for Austria (*Thara*, *Housing First Vienna*, and *ERfA-Sewing Workshop*), two cases for Italy (*Ánde Škola* and *Tutti a casa*), one case for Belgium (*Ten for Cooking*), and two for the UK (*MigRom* and *Inspire! NEET programme*). Furthermore, a number of projects are still at an early stage (*Romane Buca*, *Housing First Vienna*, *MigRom* and *Inspire! NEET programme*), so we cannot give an account of the institutionalization and up-scaling dynamics, which are an important aspect of welfare regime-related social innovation patterns (cf. Kazepov *et al.* 2013).

<sup>47</sup> For instance, the population covered by the initiative *Sprakstodjande insatser* was broadened.

<sup>48</sup> As for Belgium, the only initiative which made use of EU financial resources – *Ten for Cooking* – was led by a public administration. However, considering all the projects included in our sample, a mixed situation emerges, with case studies equally distributed between projects led by public services, social enterprises and other kinds of actors (one for each category) (cf. Section 4.4).

<sup>49</sup> In the case of *Thara*, there was a further attempt to apply for ESF resources. This attempt failed, but the project was continued, relying on domestic resources.

rather confident that the three-year experiment will prove the effectiveness of the project so as to gain political support and domestic funding for its continuation. Consequently, no further recourse to EU funds is envisaged.

As for the UK, partnerships implementing socially innovative projects are varied, with public authorities slightly less involved in leading those initiatives than in other cases. This appears in line with typical features of Liberal welfare regimes, where public sector intervention is often residual. Considering the two initiatives which made use of EU resources, one was led by an NGO (*Inspire! NEET programme*) and one by a University (*MigRom*). The other two British initiatives included in our sample were led, respectively, by an NGO (in partnership with a public authority) and a social enterprise. Public bodies, internal resources, external consultancies and other partners involved in the projects appear equally important in providing support to organisations dealing with EU resources. Both in the case of *Inspire! NEET programme* and *MigRom*, EU financial resources were used in order to overcome public budget cuts in the areas of the initiatives (services to NEETs and Roma engagement schemes), in a way replacing welfare state provisions. In the case of *MigRom*, the promoters of the project are confident that, after the expiration of the EU funded project, the initiative will be continued, relying exclusively on private funds. As for the *Inspire! NEET programme*, the initiative as such will not be continued after the end of the ESF project. However, the promoters will apply for ESF funding for follow-up initiatives.

The Italian cases included in our sample were led by NGOs. In both cases, little support in dealing with EU resources was offered by public bodies, so that the promoters of those initiatives plan to turn to external consultants in the future. These cases have different dynamics and perspectives, even though they share a willingness to make further use of EU resources in the future. As for the project *Tutti a Casa*, EU cognitive resources were used for designing the initiative, which has then been institutionalized (also relying on the support of the Municipality of Bologna). In this case, future access to EU financial resources is envisaged in order to up-scale the project. In the case of *Ánde Škola*, resources provided by the ESF co-funded programme Principi Attivi were crucial for the implementation of the initiative. Now the funding period has ended, the implementation of the project has continued, but the level of institutionalization is so precarious that its survival is linked to access to further EU financial resources. This case appears particularly illustrative of some common features of social innovation dynamics in Familistic welfare regimes like Italy (Kazepov *et al.* 2013): passive subsidiarity and fragmentation. First, even though the project was recognised as good practice, public support ceased after the expiration of EU co-funded resources and, the continuation of the initiative was exclusively left to the members of the association Alteramente. Second, mechanisms to catch and spread local innovative practices are missing, thus preventing any up-scaling process.

## 6. Concluding remarks

This study has shed light on the importance of EU resources in promoting and supporting socially innovative initiatives implemented at the local level: most of the projects included in our sample made use of these resources, especially in the domains of Roma inclusion and labour market activation. In other words, the EU level appears as a key layer of multi-scalar social innovation systems, often able to directly sustain local projects, bypassing the national level. In this sense, the EU has the potential to stimulate ‘bottom-linked strategies’ (Moulaert 2010) for innovating social policies and actions, even

though, in some cases, the degree of innovation of EU supported initiatives appears limited, insofar as interventions often work to consolidate existing policy paradigms (e.g. in the field of labour market activation).

Looking at the kind of resources that were actually used, it emerges that financial and cognitive resources made available by the EU have played a key role in many of the projects considered. Cognitive resources have been especially important in the initiatives related to Housing First and Roma inclusion. EU resources have been used for a variety of purposes, from conception and design to the implementation of local socially innovative projects. However, despite the attention paid by the EU to this aspect (cf. Sabato *et al.* 2015), none of our case studies used these resources in order to up-scale the initiatives.

As for the cases in which no EU resources were used, a number of reasons have been put forward, including: 1) specific features of the projects; 2) the availability of domestic resources coupled with the political will to use them in order to implement the projects; 3) domestic actors' perception that no EU resources were available in the policy areas of their interest.

Interestingly enough, in most of the cases where EU resources were used, they have been deemed essential for the implementation of the projects by the promoters of the initiative. In other words, without these resources (notably, financial resources), launching these initiatives would have been extremely difficult, either because of the lack of domestic funds or because of the innovativeness of the initiatives, sometimes at odds with established domestic policy legacies. Indeed, the possibility of experimenting with new policy approaches, instruments and working methods is often seen as the main added value of EU resources and, in some cases, domestic actors have strategically used them to introduce new policy approaches (notably, in the domains of Roma inclusion and Housing First) and instruments (especially in the domain of labour market activation). We refer to this phenomenon as 'leverage effect' of EU resources for social innovation.

Our analysis has also highlighted a number of shortcomings which make access to EU resources and their management difficult, in particular for smaller organisations. Managing EU funds often represents a considerable burden: administrative procedures are perceived as complex and time-consuming. Furthermore, not all the organisations involved have internal expertise to deal with them. In the absence of internal expertise, and given the cost of turning to external consultancies, public bodies are often the main source of support in dealing with EU resources. However, the availability of this kind of support varies in the different countries and the effectiveness of support provided is not always optimal. Financial requirements related to EU funds can also be an obstacle for small organisations<sup>50</sup>. In some cases, these shortcomings contribute to a 'frozen' situation where big and well-established organisations which have developed expertise and experience in dealing with EU resources enjoy a sort of incumbents' advantage, while access to EU funds proves to be extremely hard for smaller organisations.

Besides the shortcomings listed above, one of the most interesting findings of the present research is that the EU-supported local socially innovative initiatives analysed – including the ones for which such

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<sup>50</sup> For instance, the fact that funding is provided on an annual basis and the organisations must provide money upfront for the costs incurred has been deemed very problematic, as is the need to provide financial guarantees before accessing the funds.

support was essential – show a relatively high rate of institutionalization after the expiration of the EU co-funding period, and, importantly, the chances that the specific initiatives are institutionalised may depend on the welfare regimes. In other words, experimental projects are often mainstreamed into public policies and funded through domestic resources. The degree of institutionalization varies, however: in some cases, it is rather precarious and, often, the up-scaling of initiatives is limited.

When it comes to country peculiarities in using EU resources for social innovation, and the ways in which countries belonging to the different welfare regimes are able to integrate those resources into domestic social innovation patterns, it should be pointed out that our sample is too limited to allow for any generalisation. Some tendencies can nevertheless be observed.

In Sweden, EU resources seem to be fully integrated into the pattern of ‘supported social innovation’ characterising Universalistic welfare regimes, where a big role (both in implementing and supporting social innovation) is generally played by public authorities. In this context, EU resources are used to experiment with innovative policy approaches and instruments challenging domestic policy legacies. In some cases (especially in the domain of labour market policies), this has entailed some moves towards a more market-oriented and for-profit governance of social policies. Successful initiatives supported by EU resources are often mainstreamed into public policies and, in some cases, up-scaled. Once the projects are institutionalized, no further usage of EU resources is envisaged.

In countries belonging to Corporatist-conservative welfare regimes (notably, in Austria), partnerships implementing socially innovative projects are more varied and NGOs often take the lead in such initiatives. With respect to Housing First and Roma inclusion-initiatives, the Austrian examples show positive results in two aspects. First, the EU contributed to awareness raising with respect to new needs and new target groups. Second, there was a progressive broadening (not a substitution) of Austrian corporatist governance. As in Sweden, EU resources are often used to experiment with innovative policy approaches and instruments challenging domestic policy legacies, and successful experiments are often institutionalized (even though up-scaling is more limited). In this case, however, the institutionalization of the initiative does not close the cycle of usage of EU resources. Indeed, future recourse to those resources (e.g. to up-scale the initiative or to implement follow-up projects) is often envisaged.

In the UK, partnerships implementing socially innovative projects are varied, with public authorities slightly less involved in leading these initiatives and in providing support in dealing with EU resources. In the two English cases making use of EU resources, EU funds were used in order to overcome public budget cuts in the areas of the initiatives. This reflects an understanding of social innovation as a replacement for welfare state provision (a dynamic supposed to characterise social innovation in Liberal welfare regimes). Within the British context of a Liberal welfare regime, the innovative elements of the initiatives have been limited.

Finally, the prevalence of initiatives led by NGOs and a lack of institutional support in dealing with EU resources emerge from the Italian case studies. When it comes to institutionalization dynamics and future perspectives on the usage of EU resources, however, these cases are extremely different. One of them (*Tutti a casa*) is characterised by a good degree of institutionalization (also thanks to the support of a municipality) and by the willingness to apply for EU funds in order to up-scale the initiative. Conversely, in the other case (*Ánde Škola*), institutionalization has been extremely precarious, there

has been no support at all from the public authorities, and the continuation of the project depends on the possibility of obtaining further EU funds.

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## **Annex 1. Short description of the case studies<sup>51</sup>**

### ***Case study no.1: Thara***

Thara, meaning tomorrow or future in Romanes, is a project that aims at improving the access to the Austrian labour market and the relevant Austrian institutions for Roma and Romnja. Although organized as a project and financed on an annual basis, Thara has become institutionalized as a cornerstone in the Austrian Roma policy. Besides another project in the province of Burgenland, it is the only Austrian labour market initiative directly targeted at this ethnic group. Thara, located in the city of Vienna, was funded by the EU community initiative EQUAL from 2005 to 2007 and has since received annual project support from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The project tries to compensate a long history of discrimination and stigmatization by means of occupational advice for Roma as well as sensitization workshops and information events for members of the mainstream society. From the very beginning, issues of labour market integration and ethnic identity have been tackled together in a series of annual projects with different foci. The first education and activation program for instance consisted of a broad variety of elements, reaching from personal tutoring on career opportunities, computer and media workshops, social counselling, career and business start-up counselling and business behaviour trainings, complemented by workshops on theatre, music, dance and Roma history as well as language courses in Romanes. Later projects also included internships, with financial contributions from the Public Employment Service. Volkshilfe, the project leader, is a non-partisan non-profit organization. Currently, four women are employed for Thara; two belong to the Roma community. One of them is working as project leader, one as project coordinator and two as education and occupation consultants.

### ***Case study no.2: Ánde Škola (Alteramente)***

The initiative started in 2013 and was designed and managed by a local association for the promotion of social inclusion called *Alteramente*.

The project is inspired and based on field research on the Roma Camp in Lecce (a city of about 90,000 inhabitants in the South of Italy) that consented to allow a small group of students to establish good relationships with the inhabitants and to understand their needs and resources for building an effective initiative in favour of their inclusion.

The innovative content of the project lies in the double aim of supporting educational pathways and increasing social inclusion of Roma children. They received help in their homework and were involved in cultural and recreational activities. They have had the possibility to spend some time out of the camp and from the very structured context of the school to help them better get to know the opportunities of the city and in overcoming segregation through contact with different people. They are also encouraged to ascribe a positive value to their double identity, culture and language, to avoid the labelling effect which has an influence on their lives.

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<sup>51</sup> These short presentations have been written by the authors of the case studies, who we would like to thank.

The project aimed to support 27 children (aged 5-10) living in the camp and attending primary school. They are also considered as a sort of 'key' to open new collaborations between the camp and the rest of the city. Their families and the community members are involved in the realisation of the activities, to promote children participation and some events connected to the project.

The project was run by four members of the Association, supported by 15 volunteers of a Catholic church and a network of associations. Social workers of the local social services and school teachers were also involved in the project.

Financing was awarded for one year by the Puglia Region, through funds dedicated to young entrepreneurs, called *Principi Attivi: Giovani Idee per una Puglia Migliore*. After the funding period expired, the project continued thanks to a crowdfunding campaign and the contribution of Roma parents.

### **Case study no.3: MigRom**

This is a case study about engagement strategies between Manchester institutions and Romanian Roma living in Southeast Manchester. As the engagement is continuously evolving, the report should be regarded as a 'snapshot' taken between October 2014 and March 2015. The scheme under scrutiny is co-managed by the Regeneration department of the Manchester City Council and coordinated by the Romani Project at the University of Manchester. It is an integrated part of the EU-funded research project MigRom: *'The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects and future engagement strategies'*. MigRom lasts from 2013 to 2017 with a total budget of €2.5 million. About €250,000 is reserved for outreach activities in Manchester. Apart from international academic partners and the Manchester City Council, the European Roma and Traveller Forum is also part of the consortium.

The engagement strategy consists of various activities, such as media interventions, making exchange experiences available to young people, awareness raising in local institutions and so on. Two main activities stand out. The first is the weekly drop-in consultations for Roma. Three outreach workers, who are familiar with Roma culture and speak Romani and Romanian, hosts the consultations. Two of them are themselves Romanian Roma from the Manchester community. This team, supported by academics, assesses needs and develop responses, like direct support or referral. The second activity entails supporting an informal 'leadership group' of young Roma volunteers. The formation of a community group that could communicate on behalf of the Roma community and support them in various ways is regarded as a desirable legacy for the project.

A key innovative feature of this project is that experiences with engagement activities also provide input for the MigRom research, i.e. a longitudinal ethnographic survey of the Romanian Roma in Manchester and their interactions with public authorities and services.

### **Case study no.4: Romane Buca in Sundbyberg**

*Romane Buca* is a national project aimed to increase social inclusion of Roma people. It is co-financed by ESF and *Arbetsförmedlingen*, the national Employment Service and its total cost is six million €.

*Romane Buca in Sundbybergs Folkhögskola* is part of this initiative and it is focused on the Municipality of Stockholm.

The main actors involved are: the Association *Sensus (Sensus studieförbund)* that is the main actor responsible for the project; *Arbetsförmedlingen*, the national Employment Service and the largest job placement service in Sweden; and *Sundbyberg Folk High School (folkhögskola)*, a for profit organizations providing adult education.

The project deals with an 'old' issue (social exclusion of Roma) and consolidates policy aims (education and access to labour market) through a new strategy which integrates educational and vocational pathways, economic provisions, social and health measures, support to job inclusion and attention for cultural aspects within a personalised approach.

Two groups of people were involved in two pathways. 21 students took part to the first educational course. 19 participated to the second course. They were mainly young adults. The programme was to support them in filling the gaps in previous education and gain a post-secondary school vocational qualification as assistants for people with social and/or health difficulties. Internships in external organisations completed their experience and gave them the possibility to learn about different contexts and have relationships with people outside their own community.

All the participants were registered at the Employment Service. They received economic benefits taking into account their personal and family conditions (many of them had children) for the duration of the plan. Students with cognitive problems received also technological advice and other support.

The project's aim was also to help them to learn about the services and promote trust towards the public institutions. The so-called *brobyggare* (bridge-builder), a new profession created within the project, had the function to support the dialogue and the relationship with the public and private institutions involved.

The personalised approach and the strict integration of social intervention, cultural awareness, education and activation have proved to shape a very effective strategy to support Roma people in social inclusion pathways.

#### **Case study no.5: The Emmaüs Monastery Housing First Experiment**

The 'Emmaüs Monastery project' was a self-proclaimed Housing First experiment with a group of eleven Roma families from Slovakian decent living in a monastery building in the neighbourhood Muide of Ghent. Fifty-four people lived in this building. Thirty of them are children. The experiment started as an occupation of the monastery by squatters, which was only the culmination point of a long series of actions to defend the right to housing for marginalized groups. These actions were coordinated and communicated by the 'Movement Right to Housing' (Beweging Recht op Wonen in Dutch), an atypical and ideologically diverse coalition of third sector organisations and volunteers including local activists and anarchist squatters. They joined forces around the housing problems of homeless families and later Slovakian Roma migrant families specifically.

After several months of squatting and a lot of (mediatized) conflict the coalition succeeded, with mediation of the City of Ghent, to get a 'Granted Occupation' for a period of 10 months. In this period the monastery was recognized as the domicile of the families. This is crucial because it enabled them

to exercise some of their rights, for instance related to child support. During the 'granted occupation' activist were forced to take responsibility as service providers, which put pressure on the cohesion amongst partners. A limited amount of resources was gathered via local supporters, donations by Christian organisations and some of the involved NGOs were able to detach part-time staff. This controversial 'project' lasted about one year, from July 2013 to the end of June 2014. The group that stayed was forced to leave in September 2014 after a judicial decision. The majority of the families are now back on the streets (in new squats) and some of them are receiving support through other local initiatives.

#### ***Case study no.6: Camden Housing First***

Camden Housing First (CAMHF) is commissioned by Camden Borough council to support 'chronically homeless' people in attaining an independent tenancy, to sustain this tenancy and to work with them on various support needs. Camden, a central London borough, was amongst the first in the UK to implement a Pathway model in 2007. In this system clients have to go through various steps (or beds) to be considered 'housing ready'. A substantial minority of the Camden Pathway clients (about 20-25%) get stuck in this system, often because of behavioural issues related to persistent addictions. In order to improve the Pathway an innovation fund was set up in 2011. The service provider Single Homeless Project suggested the Housing First. All CAMHF clients have multiple support needs, they lived in the Pathway for at least three years and they have been assessed by these services as unable to live independently.

The project started as a two-year pilot project organised by the Single Homeless Project in February 2012. After the pilot project the commissioner launched a tender. St. Mungo's Broadway now holds the contract for three years. In February 2015 the CAMHF team consists of one coordinator, three support workers and one peer worker that recently joined the team. Fourteen people were already housed and supported. Six others were supported by the project and in the phase of looking for an apartment.

CAMHF is a 'scattered' housing first project, which means that the dwellings of clients are spread geographically. Apartments are rented on the private housing market outside Camden. To find affordable housing in London, difficulties related to ending support relations in order to include new clients and administrative thresholds to including homeless migrants are some the biggest governance challenges from the social innovation perspective.

#### ***Case study no.7: Tutti a casa (All at home)***

The project *Tutti a casa* (All at Home) was overseen by the non-profit organization *Piazza Grande* in the city of Bologna, in central Italy. It has been selected within the *ImPRovE* research as the first application of the Housing First model in Italy.

The Association *Piazza Grande* was founded in 1994 in a public shelter in Bologna and the majority of its members were homeless. It has always been an original initiative in Italy, both in its composition and for the guiding principles based on self-organization and mutual-support of homeless people, aimed at overcoming their condition of marginality to become active members of society.

The project is addressed to homeless people and families with minor children living on the street, in shelters or in inadequate, precarious and/or unhealthy situations.

It was born at the end of 2012 and after about one year, it was managing about 40 private and 4 public apartments in the Municipality of Bologna, welcoming 160 ex-homeless tenants.

The costs for one year of operation was covered by a 20,000 € grant provided by the Bank Foundation, 8,500 € from private donors, 8,600 € from involved Municipalities (mainly ordinary social services budget for internships or subsidies to tenants) and 16,000 € from rents paid by the tenants.

In fact, the apartments are mainly rented in the private market and they are not free of charge for the tenants. The amount of rent based on the household condition and is lower than the market price and also includes utility costs.

The association is the holder of the rent-contracts and supervisor of the apartments' management providing the economic and formal guarantees and taking charge of bureaucratic practices.

The tenants are supported by a complex network of public-private organisations in establishing the appropriate economic and working conditions in order to pay rent and in all the aspects linked to living in a house (relational, organisational, social, psychological and so on).

#### ***Case study no.8: Housing First Stockholm***

Housing First in Stockholm - *Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad* - is a project aimed at developing a local model of Housing First to support homeless people. It was developed after the launch of the model at the national level promoted by the University of Lund. The goals are to reduce homelessness, improve health and quality of life of homeless people and promote a better use of public resources. The project addresses homeless people who do not qualify for an apartment according to the traditional staircase model and present both substance addiction and mental disease. The beneficiaries are provided with a stable single dwelling, regardless of their participation in any kind of treatment and of their habits in terms of substance use. The only rules they have to comply with are those of the Tenant Act, as any other tenant in Sweden. During the trial period (9-24 months) the beneficiaries sublet the apartment from the social services of the local district. After this trial period, they can have a direct rental contract, thus accessing the regular housing market. They are required to pay their monthly rent, proportionally to their eventual income. Municipal social services intervene to pay the residual part. Housing First in Stockholm is led and entirely funded by the Municipality of Stockholm. The available apartments (24) are scattered in the properties of the municipal housing company *Svenska Bostäder* within the city of Stockholm and they are selected among the quota already earmarked for social housing. The first trial project (2010-2014) hosted 35 people, 9 of which got a direct rental contract. The project also offer social support, provided by *Stockholms Stadsmision*, a big local NGO. It is supported by an interdisciplinary staff and is available on call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. It is entirely separated from housing, that is, the goal is to monitor the experience and intervene in case of request, not to propose treatments or social plans. A second edition of the project for 2014-2016 was starting up at the time of our fieldwork. It should involve more people and apartments (from 24 to 64).

### ***Case study no.9: Housing First Vienna***

Housing First in Vienna started as a pilot project, which was established in a close cooperation between neunerhaus, one of the smaller service providers of assistance to homeless people, and Fonds Soziales Wien (FSW), an outsourced organization of the city that provides facilities and funding for care for elderly, giving shelter to homeless people and refugees, and support for people with disabilities. This pilot project is taking place in a context of policy reorientation in the field of homelessness, with other key service providers for homeless people in Vienna implementing diverse experimentations on different forms of Housing First and under the coordination of the FSW.

The work of neunerhaus is centered on the principle of emancipation, understood as supporting individual autonomy. This resulted in strong interest in finding more individualized and better fitting approaches to service delivery for homeless people than the established model based on the consecutive stages of emergency accommodation, temporary housing and, eventually, own apartments. Housing First aims to provide homeless people directly with their own apartments. A reference for the ideas on the reconceptualization of assistance for the homeless was found in the US approach to Housing First for people with psychiatric diagnoses and problems with drug abuse. The FSW and several service providers have established working groups to discuss future principles and standards of homeless charity in Vienna and also perspectives for promoting affordable housing. Additionally, conferences with a nation-wide outreach were organized. Political decisions will be taken when evaluation results of the neunerhaus pilot project will be available, which ends in 2015. The Greens, the junior partner in the governing coalition, seem to have agreed on a definitive position in favor of Housing First, the social-democratic party – the well-established senior partner – has decided to wait for further evaluations of the experimental implementations of Housing First before reaching a final position.

### ***Case study no. 10: Ten For Cooking***

Ten for Cooking - 'Tien voor koken' in Dutch - is a training trajectory for people on minimum subsistence income (social assistance benefits) who participate to find a job in the catering sector in the city of Leuven. All participants are clients of the local public welfare centre (OCMW) Leuven and the majority of them are foreign-language newcomers. The training takes six months. Besides language, basic math skills, hygiene and safety instructions, a lot of attention goes to workplace based learning and internships with local employers. The project management is based on a partnership between the OCMW Leuven (initiator and coordinator), the social economy organization SPIT vzw (coordinator), the local catering department of the multinational company Sodexo, the adult education centre of the school VTI Leuven and the Centre for Basic Education Leuven. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the sector fund Horeca Vorming Vlaanderen. The latter is also part of the project's steering group. This program was developed by the OCMW who observed that usual activation strategies for their target population (like article 60§7) failed to get people into employment on the regular labour market. Bringing these different partners and expertise together, it is aimed to simultaneously enhance the employment chances of the participants and meet needs of a sector that has problems finding good staff. The project coordinators try to find good 'matches' between participants and employers to arrange employment after the training and internships. Throughout this

project they experienced a cultural and organisational shift towards a more entrepreneurial and tailored approach for activating OCMW clients. The number of participants that ended up working in 'regular companies' (including subsidized employment) exceeded expectations

### ***Case study no. 11: Inspire! NEET programme***

The Inspire! NEET Programme engaged with young people between 14 and 19 years old that are not in education, employment or training or at risk of becoming so. The aim was to prevent them from dropping out or to get them (back) into education, training or employment (from NEET to EET). It operated across six North London boroughs: Barnet, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

The project ran from the January 2012 until March 2015. It was part of the 2007-2013 England ESF programme and it was regarded as a best practice of this programme. The European Social Fund financed the project with match funding of the Skills Funding Agency, sponsored by the Department for Business Innovation & Skill. The main aim of the project was to benefit a minimum of 1,522 young people in London who are NEET to re-engage with education, training or employment for a minimum of 26 weeks. The project worked with an output oriented funding structure. The initial contract budget was £730,200. All pre-determined goals were reached and surpassed.

The project was managed by Inspire!, which is Hackney's Education Business Partnership. The delivery of the project, which included outreach, need assessment, individual case management and training activities, was subcontracted to various organisations. In total the consortium of actors consists of 48 different major and minor partners, six of them are main subcontractors. The group of main subcontractors include: community organisations, local authorities, career services, a college and social enterprises.

### ***Case study no. 12: Rätt Steg (Right Step)***

Right Step - *Rätt Steg* - is a project aimed at fostering access to labour market and to Swedish society by low-educated and illiterate newcomers, i.e. asylum seekers and refugees living in Sweden since no more than three years. New methods of teaching the Swedish language have been tested in a school for adult education in an immigrant-dense neighbourhood of Stockholm and are based on the idea that a language cannot be learned as something isolated from its social use. This principle is particularly effective when it is applied to a target group with low or no previous education. Students could influence the content of the lessons by proposing concrete life situations and expressing specific needs. The courses were organized into different modules (health, work, social life, parenthood, basic computer knowledge) and mixed traditional teaching, practical workshops, conversations, field visits and extra activities including gym, swimming, cycling, music, household finance. Finally, the beneficiaries had the opportunity to attend a three months internship. The project involved 81 participants, all refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia. The staff included a project manager, two mentors and two native language teaching assistants, which has been one of the most innovative aspect of the project. Right Step was managed by Swedish for Immigrants, a national public service of adult education for immigrants, which is managed and financed at the municipal level. It was carried



out as a pilot project from 2009 to 2012 then it became a permanent unit within the organization, although still operating only in the same school where it was tested. Two other organizations were involved in Right Step: the Swedish Employment Service and *Jobbtorg Stockholm*. The former is the national authority providing benefits and services for unemployed people, the second is an agency of the City of Stockholm providing services for unemployed people. Right Step was a sub-project of a huge programme called *Etablering Stockholm*, run by the Municipality of Stockholm. The programme had a total budget of around 10 million euros and was co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Municipality of Stockholm.

### **Case study no. 13: Språkstödjande insatser (Fair Matching and Language Support)**

*Språkstödjande insatser* means 'Fair Matching and Language Support'. It is a permanent Unit of the public organization *Swedish for Immigrants (Svenska för invandrare, SFI)* in Stockholm. The initiative involved *Jobbtorg Stockholm* (the municipal jobcentre), *Vuxenutbildning* (the agency for adult education), the local agency of *Arbetsförmedlingen* (the national Employment Service) and an informal network of employers.

It was an experimentation aimed to develop a new strategy to improve refugees' and immigrant newcomers' inclusion in Swedish society and labour market, through educational and vocational activities. The basic idea was to combine language lessons and job practice, offering a special support to *SFI's* users in doing internships in companies to improve at the same time their linguistic and professional skills.

It received about 9 million € as *ERF* co-funding, over 50% of the total budget; the Municipality covered the remaining cost.

After the first experimentation, a new method has been implemented in the local welfare system as part of *SFI's* activities. The target group has been expanded to include unemployed immigrants with low language skills. The participants number about 200 a year.

*Språkstödjande insatser's* aim is to support them in social and labour market inclusion, empowering them and reinforcing their language skills through pathways in an extra-school environment.

The method promoted by the project integrates: A) A first training period aimed at introducing immigrants to Swedish culture, society and labour market, led by 'language supporters', (coaches who speak the participants' mother-tongue, a new professional created within the project) who also have the task to prevent and mediate relationships and, potentially, conflicts with employers during the internships. B) Courses of Swedish language. C) Personalised matching between participants' specificities and companies' requests. D) Internships organised within a stable network of aware and available employers, trained to deal with the special needs of the target group involved. In fact, the project has had also the aim to improve employers' attention to immigrant workers' difficulties and problems in the workplace through meetings with experts and *peer-to-peer* exchange.

### **Case study no. 14: ERfA - Sewing Workshop**

The non-profit employment project Nähwerkstatt (Sewing Workshop), was started in Graz, Austria's second largest city, as a collaboration between the associations ERfA (ERfAhrung für Alle) meaning experience for all, and SOMM (Selbstorganisation von und für Migrantinnen und Musliminnen), a self-organized association of immigrant and Muslim women. It aims at contributing to the social inclusion of (immigrant) women, who might otherwise remain unemployed, via their participation in the particularly low-threshold Nähwerkstatt, an initiative on the third labour market (i.e. subsidized hourly employment for people facing intersectional barriers). The project aims at offering access to the second and first labour market for these women. In its first year it was ESF-funded and has since undergone several changes in terms of involved actors, organizational structure, the target group and source of funding. Today it is funded by the Sozialamt Graz, the city's social welfare office and run by ERfA solely.

### **Case study no. 15: De Kringwinkel**

'De Kringwinkel' is a brand name of shared autonomous social economy firms that promote and facilitate the reuse of old materials in Flanders, Belgium. They are all members of the Umbrella organization KOMOSIE. This regional network helped to pioneer policy advocacy on re-use, waste reduction and social employment at the European level, co-founding the European umbrella RREUSE. In general Kringwinkels combine three goals: (1) waste reduction and sustainable use of materials; (2) jobs and learning experiences for long-term unemployed and (3) providing quality materials at low prices. The sector emerged in the early 1990s. Today it counts 31 centres and 118 stores. In 2012 it employed 5,214 persons – which equals 3,837 Full-time employed equivalents. About 80% of them have long-term unemployed.

All Kringwinkels are '*environmental entrepreneurs in the social economy*' that share a brand name, a general vision and expertise. Still, every Kringwinkel centre emerged in a distinctive local context, with a specific configuration of actors, needs and opportunities, which explain the differences among them (in size, importance added to the three main goals, activities etc.). In order to include this important local perspective, this report zooms in on *De Kringwinkel Antwerpen* a centre with six stores located in the city of Antwerp. It is amongst the largest Kringwinkels and recognized in the sector as one of the leading innovators.

The Kringwinkel is not a 'new' case of social innovation. While it is established, it is still evolving. The efforts of Kringwinkels could be regarded as part of an ecological and social transition (systemic social innovation) towards a cradle-to-cradle and sharing economy sensitive for vulnerable groups, which is still on-going and struggles to expand. Furthermore this 'older' social innovation offers a good opportunity to study how such an initiatives evolves and becomes more mainstream over time in a changing (policy) context.

### ***Case study no. 16: Furniture Reuse Network***

The Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) is the leading representative of the social economy re-use sector in the UK. The network and its members drive social innovation through a combined organisation of re-use, charitable activities and employment opportunities for target groups. The umbrella FRN, established in 1989, supports and coordinates this network of over 300 independent 're-use charities'. In 2013 the network employs over 4,000 staff, supports around 20,000 volunteers and provides training for 15,000 trainees. Combined, the FRN members reach about 950,000 low-income households, saving them an estimated £ 340 million on basic goods through the re-use of 2.7 million items, mainly furniture and electrical equipment. Being a founding member of the European umbrella Reuse the network helped to pioneer policy advocacy on re-use, waste reduction and social employment at the European level.

FRN members differ a lot in size and organisational schemes, ranging from small charities run by volunteers to highly professionalized social businesses. Individual re-use organisations have their own name, structure and local networks. Most fund their operation through the sale of collected (donated) reusable goods, grants by charitable foundations and increasingly, bulky waste collection, local welfare assistance- and take back contracts with housing associations, local authorities and large retailers respectively. While the case study report focuses on the network, it occasionally zooms in on the Bristol based SOFA project (Shifting Old Furniture Around) to include the local perspective.

The FRN is not a 'new' case of social innovation. While it has maintained a big niche, it still holds a lot of potential to steer mainstream economy and policy towards a cradle-to-cradle and sharing economy, sensitive to vulnerable groups. The efforts of the network are part of a broader ecological and social transition (systemic social innovation) that is still ongoing and struggles to expand.

## ImPRovE: Poverty Reduction in Europe.

### Social Policy and Innovation

Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation (ImPRovE) is an international research project that brings together ten outstanding research institutes and a broad network of researchers in a concerted effort to study poverty, social policy and social innovation in Europe. The ImPRovE project aims to improve the basis for evidence-based policy making in Europe, both in the short and in the long term. In the short term, this is done by carrying out research that is directly relevant for policymakers. At the same time however, ImPRovE invests in improving the long-term capacity for evidence-based policy making by upgrading the available research infrastructure, by combining both applied and fundamental research, and by optimising the information flow of research results to relevant policy makers and the civil society at large.

The two central questions driving the ImPRovE project are:

How can social cohesion be achieved in Europe?

How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro-level policies and vice versa?

The project runs from March 2012 till February 2016 and receives EU research support to the amount of Euro 2.7 million under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. The output of ImPRovE will include over 55 research papers, about 16 policy briefs and at least 3 scientific books. The ImPRovE Consortium will organise two international conferences (Spring 2014 and Winter 2015). In addition, ImPRovE will develop a new database of local projects of social innovation in Europe, cross-national comparable reference budgets for 6 countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain) and will strongly expand the available policy scenarios in the European microsimulation model EUROMOD.

More detailed information is available on the website <http://improve-research.eu>.

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