



regional observatory
for social inclusion
region of crete



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
REGION OF CRETE

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Newsletter

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CONTENTS



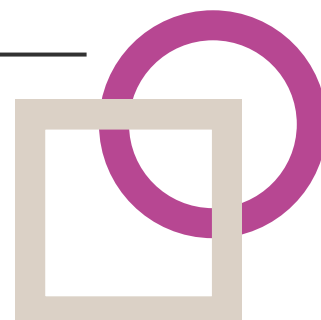
- 01 Research: Mapping and
Assessing the Needs of the
Social Welfare Structures in the
Region of Crete >
-

- 02 Online publications >
-

- 03 Observatory News: Change and
redesign of our Website >
-

- 04 Events: Participation in the
Panhellenic Conference of
Regional Social Integration
Observatories >
-

- 05 Good Practice:
Plan Primera Oportunidad >
-



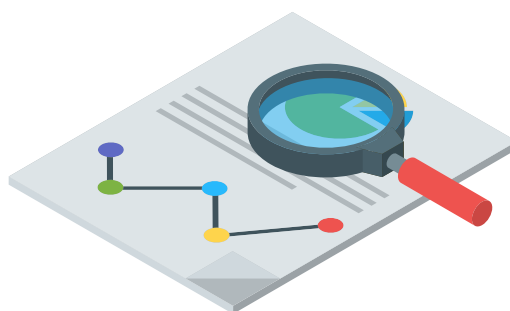


1. Mapping and Assessing the Needs of the Social Welfare Structures in the Region of Crete

Within the framework of the implementation of the Crete 2021-2027 Program, the Special Management Service for the "Crete" 2021-2027 Program, in collaboration with the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete, implemented a survey aimed at mapping the Social Welfare Structures in the Region of Crete (April 2023-September 2024).

The research-mapping captures the current state of social welfare structures in the Region of Crete, identifying shortcomings, challenges and funding priorities. The analysis is based on data collected from the Municipalities of the Region of Crete as well as previous relevant surveys which were processed by the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete and the Special Management Service of the "Crete" Program 2021-2027.

The main findings show that there is a significant variation in the geographical distribution of social infrastructure, with several deficiencies particularly in the Regional Unit of Lasithi followed by the Regional Unit of Rethymno. At the same time, an uneven distribution of structures is recorded in rural and urban areas, with large urban centers concentrating the vast majority of infrastructure.





1. Mapping and Assessing the Needs of the Social Welfare Structures in the Region of Crete

The most developed structures concern those providing services for the elderly and disabled - this is the Home Assistance Program, while significant gaps are observed in support structures for the homeless, victims of domestic violence and people living in conditions of extreme poverty - deprivation. At the same time, specialized structures targeting vulnerable social groups such as unprotected children, Roma and immigrants are completely absent.

The increase in poverty, material and social deprivation and social vulnerability, as recorded by the statistical data, highlight the need for immediate interventions. The availability of building infrastructure for the creation of new social structures remains an important issue, as several Municipalities declare the inability to find suitable spaces. Furthermore, in several cases, the existing building and logistical infrastructures require upgrading or adaptation to modern needs, in order to continue to cover the ever-increasing needs of the vulnerable groups of the population of the Region of Crete.

The main objective of the research is to serve as a tool for shaping the criteria for financing social structures through the "Crete" Program 2021-2027, ensuring the optimal use of available resources to strengthen social cohesion and equal access to welfare services.

The research is available on the Observatory's official website.

Online publications

2. Online publication on health and integration issues of immigrants in the Region of Crete

The Observatory created the online publication (e-book) entitled: "Short Policy Text on Health and Integration Issues of immigrants in the Region of Crete".

The publication aims to present the needs of migrants from third countries, including long-term residents and refugees in the Region of Crete, with an emphasis on health issues, as recorded during the implementation of the European AMIF project "EMV LII" in the Region of Crete during the period September - December 2024, with the participation of institutions and migrants.



The e-book is available through the Observatory's official website.

2. Online publication with the data of third-country citizens in the Region of Crete

The Observatory also created the online publication (e-book) entitled: "Data on Third-Country Citizens in the Region of Crete".

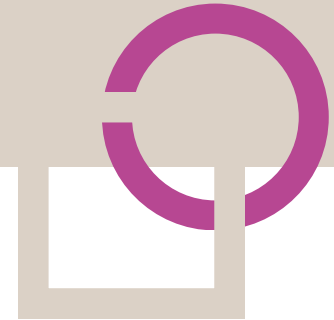
The publication aims to present data concerning applications of third-country citizens that have been submitted per year from 2021 to 2024 and reside in the Region of Crete, as well as data regarding residence permits in force.

The data presented result from the electronic registration of applications, through the interoperable systems - MIS of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.



The e-book is available through the Observatory's official website.

3. Change and redesign of our Website



Refreshing our Website!

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete is renewing its existing website, with a focus on usability and ease of navigation and with the aim of creating a user-friendly interface environment. Uniformity, ease of navigation, and readability are some of the key features that were taken into account for its redesign.

The renewed web portal:

- will be the reference point for all digital services - tools,
- will have features and functions that will allow for user management, content publishing, application integration, etc.,
- will be compatible and will operate on mobile phones and laptops with a responsive methodology and technology that will include all the operating systems of these devices (android, iOS, etc.),
- will have an interface based on internet technologies, a single point of entry and accessibility for people with disabilities.



Stay tuned!



4. Participation in the Panhellenic Conference of Regional Social Integration Observatories

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete participated in the 1st Panhellenic Conference of Regional Social Integration Observatories, organized by the South Aegean Observatory.

The conference was held in Athens, in the presence of representatives of the competent Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs and the NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework), gathering great interest from executives and organizations from all over Greece.

The topics developed at the conference mainly concerned the accessibility of special and vulnerable groups of the population.

The participants exchanged concerns, good practices and proposals for improving the coordination and operation of the Observatories to strengthen the governance of the National and Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion.



5. Plan Primera Oportunidad



Why is it good practice?

- ▶▶▶ The "Plan Primera Oportunidad" (First Chance Plan) of the Municipality of Zaragoza is an innovative and integrated social initiative to address homelessness in the city. Its main objective is to support homeless people through immediate access to housing, as well as social support, with the aim of their gradual social and professional reintegration.
- ▶▶▶ The innovation of the plan lies in the integrated and person-centered approach it adopts. It is not limited to providing housing, but also combines support in health issues (physical and mental), education and vocational training, recognizing that homelessness is a multifaceted social problem that requires complex solutions.
- ▶▶▶ Special attention is given to mental health issues faced by these people, as well as gender issues, ensuring that actions are adapted to the specific needs of each individual. The ultimate goal of the program is the restoration of dignity and the active inclusion of individuals experiencing social exclusion through empowerment and substantial support.

How is it applied?

- ▶▶▶ Housing provision under the program is based on the Housing First strategy, which offers immediate housing without conditions such as detoxification or treatment. The Municipality created the Municipal Homeless Shelter, accessible to everyone, even to people without a residence permit, with basic amenities and flexible duration of accommodation. At the same time, municipal apartments are provided to people who have found work, covering homeless people, refugees, families, while people with mental or physical difficulties live in shared apartments. The goal is stable housing as a basis for social reintegration.

5. Plan Primera Oportunidad



- ▶▶▶ Mental health support is a key pillar of the program, with the creation of a dedicated center in collaboration with Fundación La Caridad. The center provides personalized care from mental health professionals, as well as meals and empowerment activities. It includes sports, artistic and cognitive workshops that enhance the social skills of the beneficiaries. At the same time, an intergenerational approach is sought, with joint actions with a school operating in the same area with the aim of raising awareness among children and combating the stigma surrounding mental health.
- ▶▶▶ The Municipal Shelter of Zaragoza offers educational workshops to enhance the work skills of the homeless, encouraging them to re-enter the labor market or create their own initiatives. An important example is the Gambaru Association, founded by a former homeless person and offering catering, training and social support services. The team is staffed by people with experience of homelessness and offers unique knowledge and perspective. To date, it has created 46 jobs, 16 directly and the rest through partnerships. In 2024, it was awarded by the Municipality for its contribution to social inclusion.
- ▶▶▶ The Municipality of Zaragoza works closely with NGOs and social institutions to provide health, legal and social support to the homeless. The collaboration with the Caídos del Zielo theater program stands out, which helps people in social exclusion through art and has been honored with important awards. At the same time, emphasis is placed on homeless women, with skills workshops and support for cases of domestic violence. Special care is taken for elderly women who live near the shelter for direct access to services.

5. Plan Primera Oportunidad



Project results

- ▶▶▶ The Plan Primera Oportunidad program in Zaragoza has shown significant results in enhancing the quality of life of homeless people and their social integration. Specifically, from 2020 to 2023, 68 people found work, while in 2022 approximately 160 users attended the program's courses. In this context, the Municipality is making new efforts to improve and increase the housing infrastructure (from 15 apartments in 2019 to 78 in 2023) and the services it offers in order to address existing needs.

Information

- ▶▶▶ The above initiative was launched in 2020 and was identified as a good practice for addressing homelessness and mental health by the Eurocities Network: <https://inclusivecities4all.eu/good-practices/>



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