



regional observatory
for social inclusion
region of crete



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
REGION OF CRETE

July 2025

Newsletter

Issue 9



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



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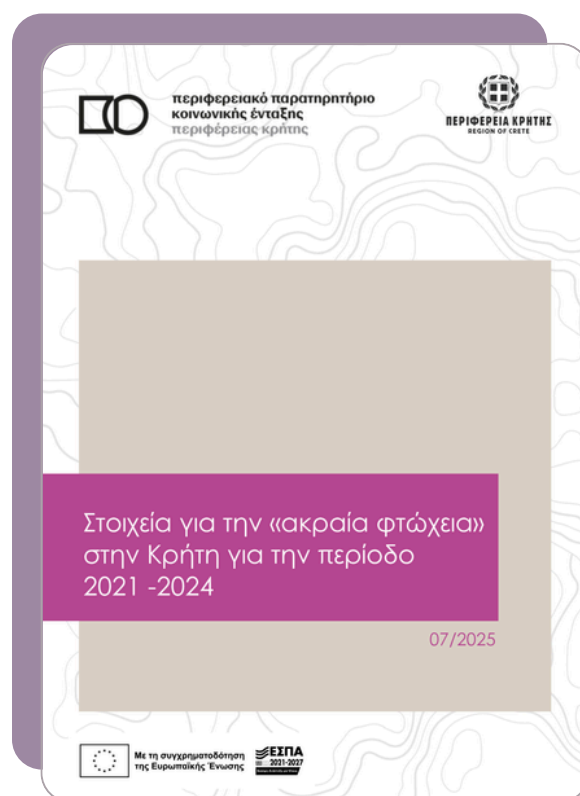
1. “Extreme Poverty” in Crete: Statistics and Trends

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete proceeded to a study entitled: **"Data on "extreme poverty" in Crete for the period 2021 -2024".**

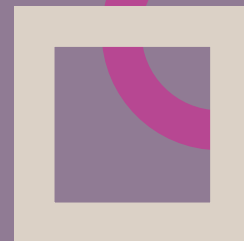
The report was based on data from the Greek Institute of Public Health and Social Security and examines extreme poverty in Crete in the period 2021–2024. The number of people receiving the Minimum Guaranteed Income was used as an extreme poverty indicator, as its income criteria are significantly below the official poverty line. In addition, the number of beneficiaries of the housing allowance was taken into account as a supplementary poverty indicator, given that its criteria approach the poverty line without exceeding it.

The Minimum Guaranteed Income is a welfare program to address poverty and social exclusion and is aimed at households living in conditions of extreme poverty, based on strict financial and property criteria.

Although until recently the MGI was granted to approximately **200,000** households, recent data from OPEKA records a significant reduction in beneficiaries, of the order of 12%: from **181,890** in October 2024 to **160,395** in April 2025.

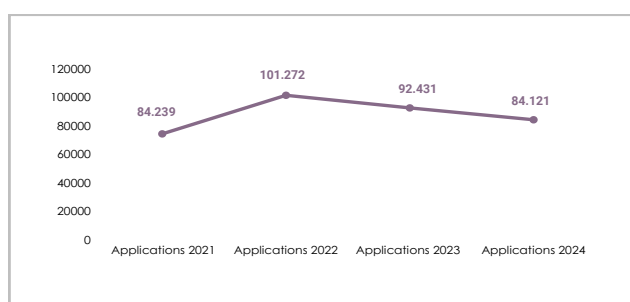


This study was carried out within the framework of the operation of the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion in the Region of Crete and the Action "Support for the Operation of the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion in the Region of Crete" under the Regional Operational Programme "Crete 2021–2027". The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund and national resources.

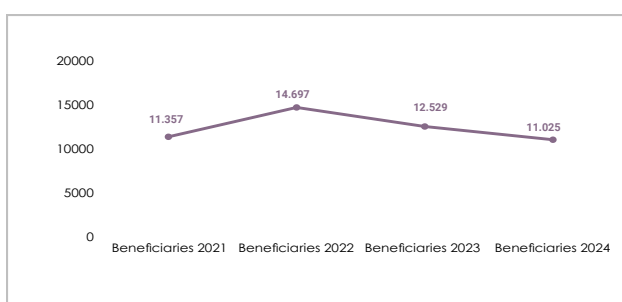


1. “Extreme Poverty” in Crete: Statistics and Trends

This gradual decline raises concerns about the adequacy of social protection, as the burden seems to be shifting exclusively to the absolute poor, ignoring the country's general social well-being.



Number of applications for membership in the KEA at the level of the Region of Crete per Year



Number of MGI Beneficiaries at the level of the Region of Crete per Year

Regarding "extreme poverty" in the Region of Crete, the **results** of the survey showed:

- Increase in applications - decrease in beneficiaries of MGI
- Strong local variations
- Significant deterioration for foreigners
- General decline in housing allowance
- Limited coverage of poverty by benefits

The study is accompanied by policy **proposals** for poverty management in the Region, which are summarized as follows:

- Revision of income criteria of the MGI
- Strengthening local social protection structures
- Targeted interventions for foreigners
- Review of housing benefit criteria
- Utilization of "comparative poverty" indicators

The full text of the research is available on the official website of the Observatory, at the following link:

<https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/category/studies/>

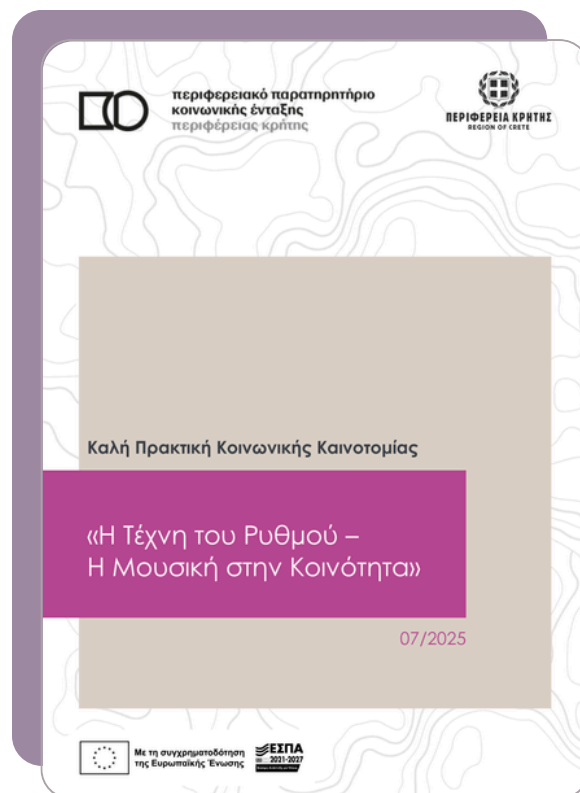
1. A Social Innovation Program in Crete!

The Observatory published an evaluation survey of the program **"The Art of Rhythm - Music in the Community"**.

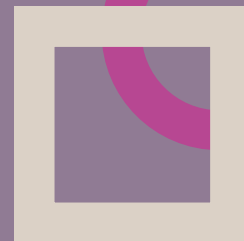
The above program is implemented by the University of Crete (Theater, Cinema and Music Laboratory of the Department of Philology) with the support of the Municipalities of Heraklion, Lasithi, Rethymno and Chania, and the Region of Crete, in particular the Sub-Region of Culture, the Directorate of Culture and the Regional Authorities of Lasithi and Chania, and is an example of social innovation, reaching over 1,100 participants throughout Crete. Through music, movement and other forms of art, it creates an open, free and inclusive space of expression and empowerment for all ages.

The exhibition presents the views of the participants regarding their experience in the program, as well as their suggestions for possible improvements in future actions.

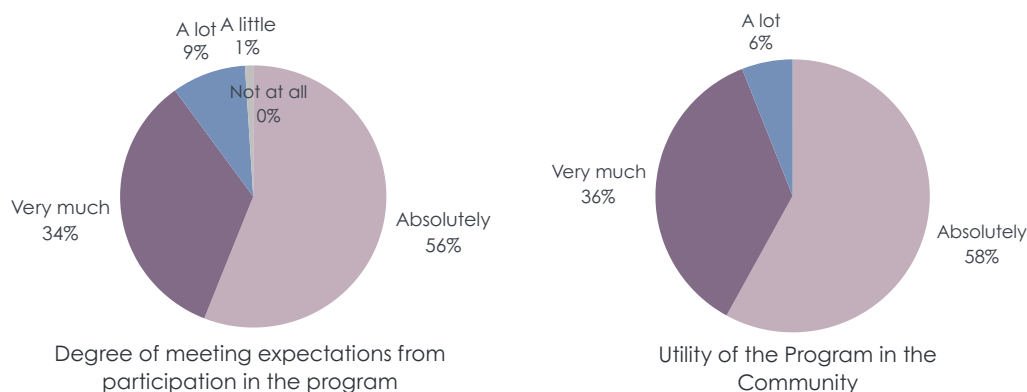
The study findings highlighted the value of the program for the community, as it essentially responds to needs for mental well-being, creative expression and enhanced social participation.



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1. A Social Innovation Program in Crete!



At the same time, it emerged as an **innovative example of socially oriented intervention**, which brings to the fore the power of music as a tool for social empowerment and inclusion. The **uniqueness and social innovation** of the program can be summarized as follows:

- Pioneering approach in Crete with experiential music for all.
- Inclusive design without exclusions.
- Combines education, empowerment and artistic democracy.
- Art is used as a means of integration, expression and connection with the community.
- Strengthens intergenerational communication, social cohesion and active aging.
- Music supports cognitive functions and mental health, especially in the elderly and people with dementia.
- Focus on vulnerable groups from areas with socio-economic difficulties.
- Strengthening partnerships with public, private and social institutions.
- Networking at national and international levels for sustainable development and dissemination of good practices.
- Possibility of expansion to schools and mental health.

The full text of the research is available on the official website of the Observatory, at the following link:

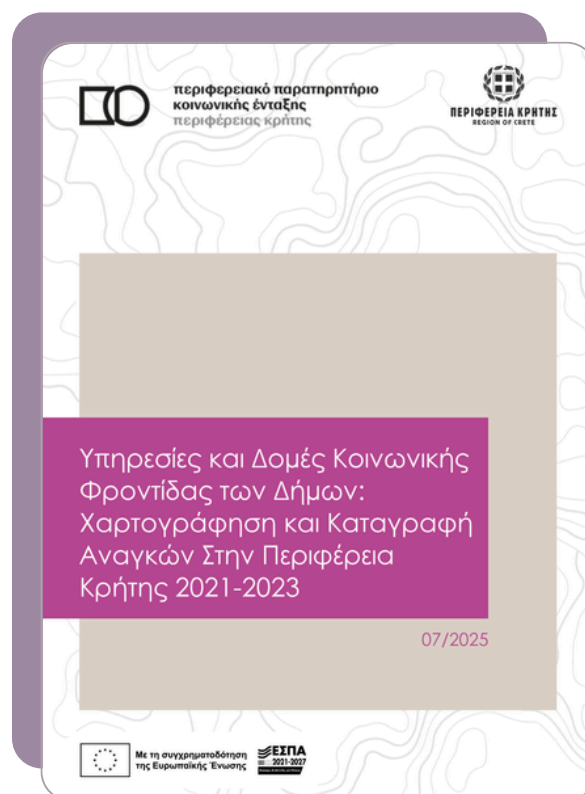
<https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/category/studies/>

1. Mapping Social Care Needs in the Region of Crete

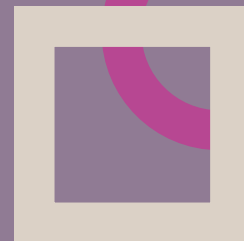
The Observatory conducted a study entitled: **“Municipal Social Care Services and Structures: Mapping and Recording of Needs in the Region of Crete 2021-2023”**.

The study focuses on the systematic mapping and analysis of the social structures and services operating in the Municipalities of the Region of Crete, during the period 2021-2023 and aims to understand their spatial distribution, the social groups they address and the deficiencies identified.

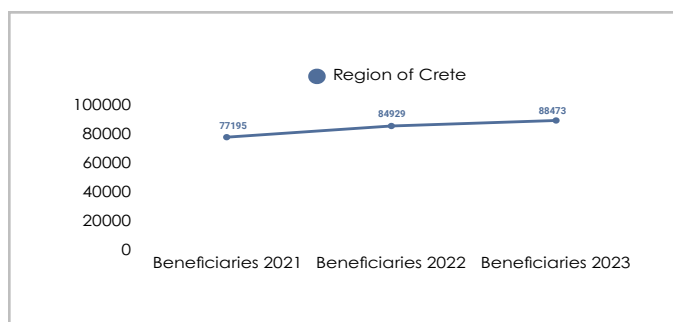
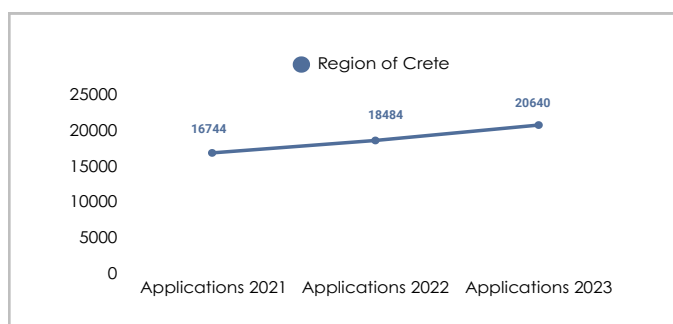
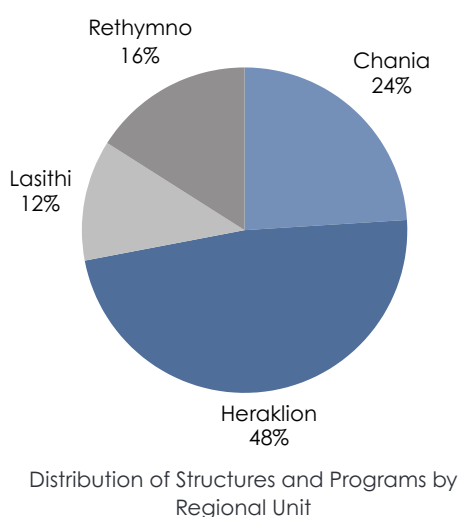
From the data recorded, it is established that the social care system in the Region of Crete constitutes a crucial pillar of support for vulnerable groups, but faces serious challenges of understaffing, inequality and infrastructure that does not meet modern needs. The growing demand is not adequately met, highlighting the need to strengthen and reorganize the network. Despite the adversities, the human resources remain dedicated, supporting the structures daily.



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1. Mapping Social Care Needs in the Region of Crete



As a result of the above, and to ensure universal access, quality service provision and the sustainability of the system throughout the Region, the study proposes the following **actions**:

- Creation of new structures in remote and underserved areas.
- Strengthening services for vulnerable groups (women, immigrants, disabled people).
- Planning for stable staffing, upgrading infrastructure and improving coordination.
- Securing stable funding for equal provision of quality services throughout the Region.

The full text of the research is available on the official website of the Observatory, at the following link:

<https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/category/studies/>



2. Consultation on Child Abuse and Protection

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete, in collaboration with UNICEF, organized on Thursday, May 29, 2025 a **Round Table** with local bodies, with the aim of **coordinating actions for the implementation of the objectives of the National and Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion, focusing on child protection issues.**

The purpose of the consultation was to highlight the main challenges faced by the child protection sector in Crete, per Municipality, as well as to formulate proposals for the prevention of child abuse and the undertaking of relevant initiatives at the local level.

As a result of the consultation, a **Policy Brief** on Child Abuse was prepared, which follows in the next section.



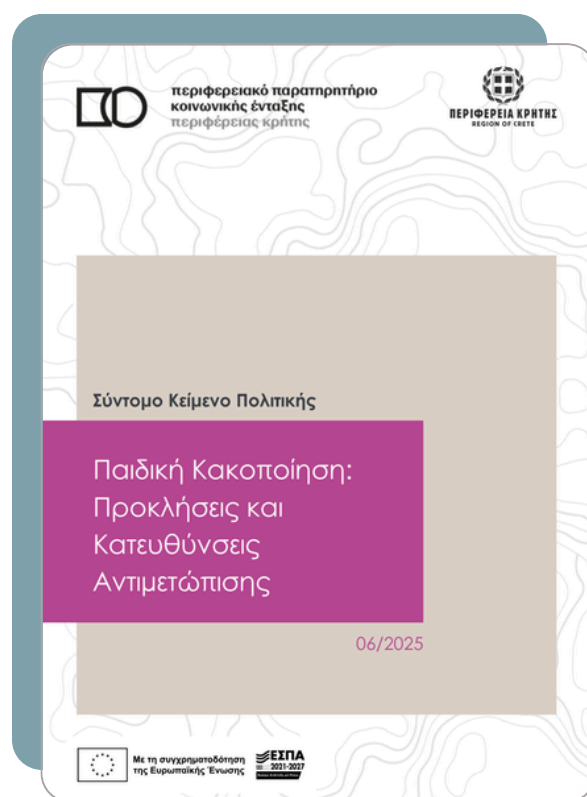
3. Towards a Holistic Approach to Child Abuse

The Observatory created the online publication (e-book) entitled: **“Child Abuse: Challenges and Directions for Response”**.

The publication is the result of a dialogue between local bodies, within the framework of the Round Table co-organized by the Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion and the UNICEF Office in Greece, on Thursday, May 29, 2025, in the Region of Crete and aims to identify the main challenges in the field of child protection in the Region of Crete, by Municipality, to propose measures for the prevention of child abuse, and to undertake relevant initiatives at the local level.

The dialogue that developed was attended by institutional representatives, local government officials, as well as specialized professionals with experience in the field of child protection.

Through the exchange of views, the serious challenges facing the child protection sector in the Region of Crete were highlighted, which directly affect both the effectiveness of interventions and the quality of care provided.



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3. Towards a Holistic Approach to Child Abuse

Specifically, the following **challenges** were identified:

- Lack of specialized services and coordination
- Ex post intervention
- Inadequate training of professionals
- Local society is unaware of how to intervene
- There is no unified child development system
- Insufficient interconnection between services
- Geographical isolation and inaccessibility of services
- Absence of child psychiatric services
- Fostering remains underdeveloped
- Inadequate recording and monitoring
- Homelessness in crisis situations further burdens child protection



Finally, **proposals** were identified for the effective treatment of child abuse, such as:

- Emphasis on prevention
- Creation of interdisciplinary coordination teams
- Collaboration with Community Centers
- Systematic training of professionals and parents
- Interconnection of data and registries
- Recording and analysis of data
- Strengthening professional fostering
- Special care for unaccompanied minors and newly arrived migrants
- Development of open structures (such as SYD)



The full text of the policy brief is available on the official website of the Observatory, at the following link:

<https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/category/policy-briefs/>

4. The Right to the City in the Context of Overtourism

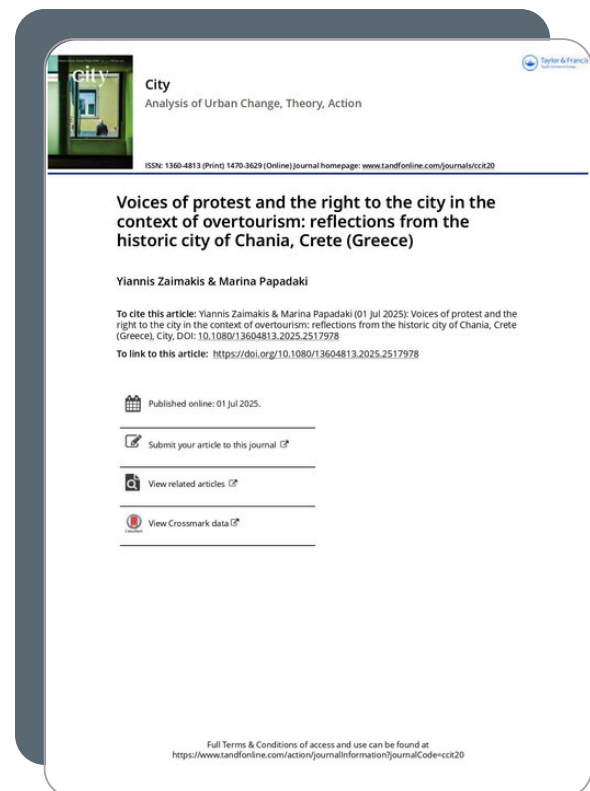
The Observatory proceeded to publish the article entitled **"Voices of Protest and the Right to the City in the Context of Overtourism: Reflections from the Historic City of Chania, Crete (Greece)"**.

The scientific article is the result of research work by Professor I. Zaimakis, Coordinator and Scientific Director of the Observatory's Research Project, and M. Papadakis, Scientific Associate of the same group.

The article examines how the rapid growth of tourism, after the financial crisis of 2008, transformed social and economic life in the old city of Chania. Based on multimodal ethnographic research in historical neighborhoods of the city, the article offers an in-depth analysis of the transformation of the economic and social structure of a city threatened by continued tourist development.

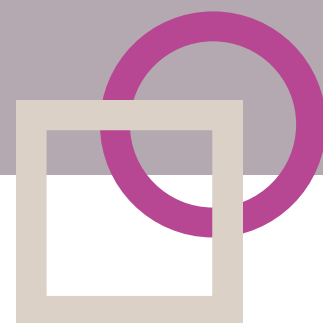
Drawing on Lefebvre's ideas on the **"right to the city"**, the research contributes to theoretical discussions around tourist monoculture, touristization and alienation from place, and attempts to open the debate around political resistance to overtourism in small historic Mediterranean towns.

The article is available on the official website of the Observatory, at the following link: <https://socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr/category/scientific-articles/>



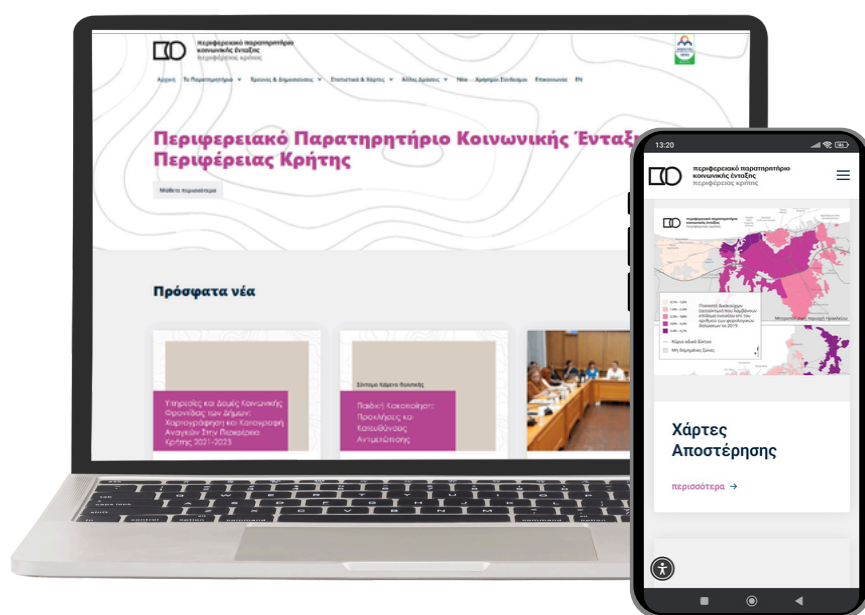
Website

5. New Website for the Observatory!



The NEW Observatory Website is now online!

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete has renewed its existing website, with a focus on usability and ease of navigation and with the aim of creating a user-friendly interface environment.

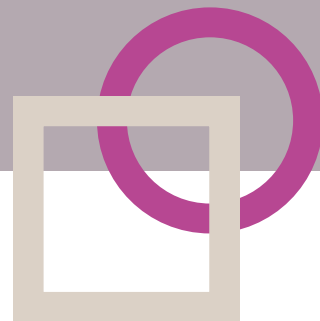


> socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr

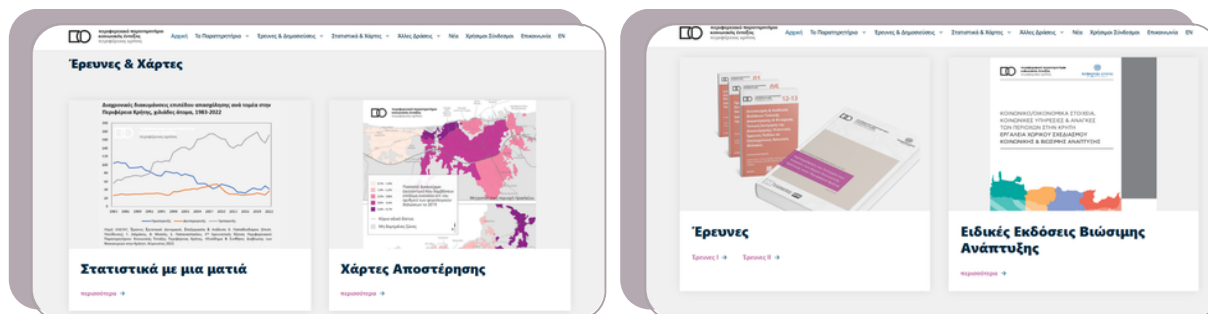
Easy access from fixed and mobile devices!

Website

5. New Website for the Observatory!



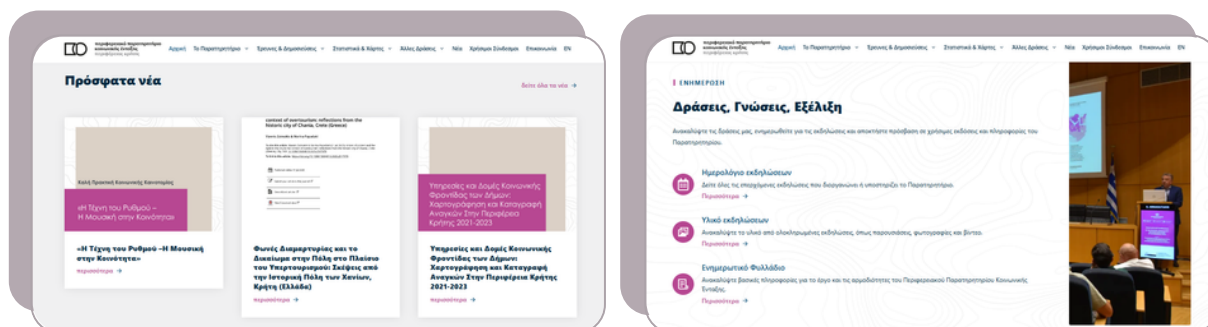
►►► Browse through surveys, statistics, maps, special publications.



►►► Take advantage of useful tools, such as the Geospatial Information Portal of the Region of Crete.



►►► Stay informed about the Observatory's actions and news.





6. Participation in a European Homelessness Event

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete participated in the “**FEANTSA Forum 2025**”, the largest European event on homelessness, implemented by the European Agency Feantsa, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, and the Municipality of Athens.

The event took place on 13 and 14 May in Athens and focused on issues such as the priority of housing over institutionalization, the social inclusion of the homeless through employment, health and education policies, as well as the importance of synergies between the public and private sectors in finding resources and supporting the homeless.

Particular emphasis was also placed on the collection and utilization of quantitative and qualitative data, with the aim of formulating effective policies and systematically monitoring the phenomenon of homelessness.





7. An Example of a Holistic Approach to Immigrant Integration

Why is it good practice?

- ▶▶▶ **Integrationshaus** is a social integration institution for immigrants-refugees-asylum seekers in Vienna that implements a holistic integration approach that combines housing, education, psychosocial and counseling support, as well as access to the labor market.
- ▶▶▶ It is an institution that strengthens the participation of immigrants in society through language, training and intercultural coexistence and is particularly aimed at vulnerable groups, such as women, children and refugees with traumatic experiences, providing personalized care.
- ▶▶▶ It operates in cooperation with public and social institutions, promoting social cohesion, adopts principles of non-discrimination and respect for dignity, and is constantly adapting to social and migration developments.

How is it applied?

- ▶▶▶ The Integrationshaus psychosocial care program offers two main housing structures. The first structure provides housing with intensive psychosocial support for people with increased needs, such as mental disorders or chronic illnesses. The second program, called "First Flat", ensures basic housing and mobile support for people living in various housing communities in Vienna. At the same time, the Integrationshaus offers socio-pedagogical housing for children and adolescents aged 3 to 18, mainly unaccompanied minors or children without the possibility of family care. These children receive psychotherapeutic support, while guidance is also provided to their caregivers. In total, 296 people benefited from the Integrationshaus housing structures in 2023, of which 158 were male-boys and 138 female-girls.



7. An Example of a Holistic Approach to Immigrant Integration

- ▶▶▶ The Integrationshaus offers free, multi-level advisory support to refugees residing in Vienna, with the aim of strengthening their social integration. The support covers issues of everyday life, such as housing, work, health, education and access to public services, and is provided in many languages with the possibility of interpretation and accompaniment by volunteers for those who do not know German. At the same time, specialized, independent legal advice and guidance on vocational training, recognition of qualifications and finding a job are offered. The advisors also support the search for housing, completing applications and financial management. Especially for young people, support is provided in independent living, while for women and girls there is special care in cases of violence, psychosomatic health and family issues. Particular attention is given to people with mental stress, with constant advice, connection to therapeutic services and support in legal matters. It is important to mention that the center is accessible to people with disabilities and the information is available in six languages.
- ▶▶▶ Integrationshaus sees education as a key tool for empowerment and social integration for young people, young adults and women. It places particular emphasis on developing German language skills, acquiring basic knowledge and professional competences, and familiarising itself with professional terminology, with the aim of facilitating access to education, the labour market and society. In this context, the “mo.o.v.e. on” programme is also implemented, which supports young people aged 15–19 (and in some cases up to 24) in their transition from school to vocational training or work. The programme concerns both students still attending school and young people who have dropped out and is provided either within public schools or through the organisation’s counselling centres. In 2023, the programme supported a total of 2,608 young people aged 14 to 24, offering them personalised educational and vocational guidance.



7. An Example of a Holistic Approach to Immigrant Integration

Project results

▶▶▶ According to the organization's annual report for 2023, 5,572 people from 72 countries received support and counseling services through the various programs of the Integrationshaus, which highlights its essential role in supporting refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in Austria.

▶▶▶ At the same time, its work has received widespread recognition, as it has been honored with many distinctions and awards, confirming its quality and social contribution.

Information

▶▶▶ For more information about the activities and work of Integrationshaus, visit its official website: <https://www.integrationshaus.at/en/integrationshaus>



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