HOMELESSNESS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: A SERIOUS SITUATION BUT NOT A HOPELESS ONE
The statistical index on housing exclusion in Europe only deals with difficulties experienced by people with housing. It does not give any perspective on the situation of people who are homeless. Extreme poverty, particularly homelessness, is a major challenge to the credibility of the European project. Particularly at a time when Member States are struggling to provide a unified response to various social crises, manifesting in an increase in situations of social distress. In this context, Europeans have an increasingly negative perception of how inequality and poverty issues are being dealt with.

No EU Member State and furthermore no developed country, has managed to eradicate homelessness. A European effort could help understand this major shared challenge and contribute to improving political responses.

Homelessness is closely linked to Europe’s biggest problems such as how migrants are received, equal rights, free movement and the exclusion of young people. In this sense, homelessness is increasingly becoming a European problem.

To aid understanding of these situations, the ETHOS typology categorises housing difficulties from homelessness to housing quality problems to security of occupation. The lines between homelessness and extreme housing difficulties are often blurred.

Although ETHOS is a widely used reference for understanding and measuring homelessness and housing exclusion, there is still no generally accepted definition in Europe. There remains fairly widespread confusion between the situation of roofless people living rough and the broader situation of those without a home, who may be for example living in a hostel.

In the following analysis, the abridged ‘Ethos light’ classification will be used as a basic reference definition for homelessness. This is a standardised definition for statistical purposes, as suggested in a 2007 European Commission study on understanding homelessness. It is nonetheless essential to note that the Member State definitions of homelessness are, in general, narrower (or, more unusually, broader).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONAL CATEGORY</th>
<th>LIVING SITUATION</th>
<th>GENERIC DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 People living rough</td>
<td>1 Public or outdoors space</td>
<td>Living rough or in a public space, without shelter that could be defined as a dwelling unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 People in emergency accommodation</td>
<td>2 Emergency accommodation</td>
<td>People without a usual place of residence who frequently move from one type of accommodation to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 People in accommodation for the homeless</td>
<td>3 Homeless hostel</td>
<td>When the period of stay is less than one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Temporary accommodation</td>
<td>5 Transitional supported accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Women’s shelter</td>
<td>7 Medical institutions</td>
<td>Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Penal institutions</td>
<td>9 Mobile homes</td>
<td>No housing available prior to release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 People living in non-conventional housing due to lack of housing</td>
<td>10 Non-conventional building</td>
<td>When the accommodation is used due to lack of housing and is not the person’s usual place of residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Temporary structure</td>
<td>12 Conventional housing but not the person’s usual place of residence</td>
<td>When accommodation is used due to lack of housing and is not the person’s usual place of residence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the absence of a universally accepted definition, the academic and institutional literature on homelessness in Europe gives an overview that, while patchy, still enables us to address the issue.

### TABLE 2

**Recent Reports on the Extent of Homelessness in the EU**

The European Observatory on Homelessness publishes regular statistical updates on the homelessness situation in Europe. The most recent is from 2014 and focuses on 15 EU Member States (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). It showed that the number of homeless people increased in recent years in all countries except Finland, where the figure fell.

The OECD recently published assessments of homelessness and the public policies that target it in OECD countries.

The European Commission estimates that there could be up to 410,000 people sleeping rough or in emergency or temporary accommodation on any given night in the European Union. This implies that almost 4.1 million people every year face homelessness for periods of varying length.

The Social Protection Committee has published several reports in recent years demonstrating a rise in the number of homeless people due to the crisis. In 2011, the census included its first attempt to count the number of homeless people using a common standard. This attempt was overall deemed unsuccessful because it did not accurately reflect the number of homeless people. It did nonetheless enable some countries to improve the quality of their data.

FEANTSA publishes regular reports based on contributions from organisations working with homeless people. Its 2012 monitoring report focused on the extent and nature of homelessness in EU Member States. National expert contributions from 21 countries showed that the number of homeless people had increased over the preceding one to five years in at least 15 of the 21 countries. FEANTSA also publishes ‘country fiches’ every year that provide an overview of homelessness in the different Member States.

The 2015 report from Housing Europe on the state of housing in the EU highlighted the increase in the number of homeless people in the EU.

### Table 3

**Available Figures (Non-comparable) on the Number of Homeless People in EU Member States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Homeless People</th>
<th>Data Year</th>
<th>Notes and Methodology</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>16,000 people</td>
<td>Year 2013</td>
<td>This only covers people registered as homeless excluding those living rough.</td>
<td>Ministry for Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2,063 people</td>
<td>1 night in 2014</td>
<td>No national statistics. There are data for the other regions but they are not comparable. Survey taken on one night. Broad definition including people sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation, in shelters for homeless people, some non-conventional places and hospitals. Excluding accommodation with family or friends.</td>
<td>La Strada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>3,466 places taken in homeless assistance services</td>
<td>1 night in 2015</td>
<td>Places taken in shelters for homeless people. Excluding people sleeping rough, people staying with family or with friends, and other people not in accommodation.</td>
<td>Agency for Social Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>462 people</td>
<td>1 night in 2013</td>
<td>This covers homeless people listed as staying in social protection centres on 31 December.</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>11,496 people</td>
<td>1 night in 2011</td>
<td>Result of the census covering only users of homeless hostels on the night of the census.</td>
<td>Czech Statistical Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the lack of data available on homelessness at EU level, Member States statistics provide the only available data for analysing trends and the gravity of the situation.

We have compiled the most recent statistics on the number of homeless people in the different Member States (see Table 2.1). In as far as possible, these statistics are based on official figures provided at national level. Where there is a lack of such figures, alternatives are suggested. Also provided is contextual information on definition, methodology and source. The trends refer only to the statistics mentioned. For the purpose of coherence, we have not referred to trends based on information from additional sources.
### HOMELINESS IN THE E.U.: A SERIOUS SITUATION BUT NOT A HOPELESS ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>5,820 people</td>
<td>1 week in 2013</td>
<td>Broad definition. Includes some people staying with families or friends, those coming from institutions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estonia</strong> (Tallinn)</td>
<td>1,371 people</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>No official data. Survey. The definition is &quot;does not have their own dwelling or rented home, does not have the possibility of permanent accommodation or sleeps somewhere temporarily.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finland</strong></td>
<td>7,500 single people &amp; 417 families</td>
<td>1 night in 2013</td>
<td>Broad definition. Includes people staying with families or friends, those coming from institutions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td>141,500 people</td>
<td>One night in 2012</td>
<td>France’s National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) carries out a study every ten years, mainly in towns of over 20,000 inhabitants. It supplements this with another study carried out in small towns. Users of meal and accommodation services are asked where they slept the night before. Geographical coverage is not uniform and this count excludes people who did not use meal or accommodation services. The estimate does however include people in reception centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>284,000 people</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Annual prevalence estimation from Germany’s federation of services for homeless people (BAG W). On the basis of extrapolations made from a 1992 study. Includes all the ETHOS light categories and the ‘hidden’ homeless. There are no official data at national level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hungary</strong></td>
<td>10,549 people</td>
<td>1 night in 2014</td>
<td>Annual survey by homeless services. Covers people in shelters and those sleeping rough. Participation is voluntary. Not all services and people are covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ireland</strong></td>
<td>3,808 people</td>
<td>1 night in 2011</td>
<td>Night count of people in homeless accommodation or identified as sleeping rough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARAK)**

- **Increase of 6% from 4,998 people to 5,620 in 2013**

**National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE)**

- **Increase of 9% between 2001 and 2012 to 141,500 people**

---

**SFI - The Danish national centre for social research**

- **Increase of 16% from 4,998 people to 5,620 in 2013**

**Tallinn Social Work Centre**

- **Decrease of 8% from 8,183 people in 2009 to 7,500 in 2012**

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### CHAP. 2

**AN OVERVIEW OF HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE 2015**

**FEANTS - THE FOUNDATION ABBÉ PIERRE**

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**CHAP. 2

**AN OVERVIEW OF HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE 2015**

**THE FOUNDATION ABBÉ PIERRE - FEANTS**
Reported statistics from Member States give a confusing image of homelessness in Europe. The data are not comparable due to disparities in definitions, methodologies, level, quality and reliability.

Most of the figures conveyed include people sleeping in emergency accommodation. Several others also cover other types of accommodation for homeless people. Several countries exclude people who are sleeping rough (for example Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovenia). A higher proportion of countries exclude people who are staying with family or friends and/or who live in institutions and have nowhere to go when they leave. Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands stand out from the others because they collect data from the widest range of living situations in their official national statistics. France is the only country where people who live in reception centres for asylum seekers are included in the estimated total. In England where applications and granting of assistance under the homelessness legislation are counted, households that do not apply are not counted. As single-person households are unlikely to receive assistance under the law, it is probable that there are many ‘hidden homeless’ people who are not being counted in this group.

Some countries that seem to have a high level of homelessness include a much wider range of living conditions in their definition of homelessness than just sleeping rough or using emergency accommodation. The countries at the top of the list often have data collection methodologies that are more robust and more exhaustive. It seems for example that the number of homeless people in Portugal is negligible compared to Finland. However, the Portuguese statistics are limited to people sleeping rough and in emergency accommodation. Finland’s 2014 statistics, on the other hand, include people that are temporarily staying with friends, acquaintances or relatives because they have nowhere else to go. The total number of homeless people in Finland was 8,316 of which 75% were living with friends or relatives, according to respondents to the survey carried out in 93% of Finland’s municipalities. The number of homeless people in Portugal would be higher than in Finland if the same definitions were used and if the geographical coverage and coverage of services were comparable.

The usefulness of comparisons is equally hampered by the significant divergences with regard to coverage, quality and nature of the data. For some countries, no data was available that we could identify (for example Cyprus, Latvia, and Malta). Others do not have official data, meaning reliance on other sources (Germany, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania). In Germany, the estimate is based on a 1992 study. In ten countries, the statistics provide a basis for describing trends (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). In several cases, the data only cover a particular region or the capital. The majority of countries collect point in time data. A smaller number of countries use administrative data to record flow data like Austria, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Some data are very old and/or are collected very occasionally. Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands collect robust data, on a regular basis, at national level.

Overall, these statistics indicate that homelessness exists everywhere in the European Union. There is no reason to think that the situation is any different in the three countries that do not have data i.e. Cyprus, Latvia and Malta.

### Table 2: Number of people sleeping rough in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>22,939</td>
<td>[18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>[19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>13,820</td>
<td>[20]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,744</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collected from a wide range of sources that are in contact with homeless people. Broad definition. Includes people staying with families or friends, those about to come out of institutions, etc.

The first figure represents the quarterly total of households to whom there is a ‘statutory duty’ of housing assistance on the part of local authorities. This depends on eligibility, being involuntarily homeless and having ‘priority need’ only includes households that have turned to the local authorities for assistance. The second figure represents the quarterly total of counts and estimates of the number of people sleeping rough on a given night during the period surveyed, as carried out by the local authorities. The local authorities decide to proceed by counting or by estimating.

The number of people sleeping rough, in shelters, in accommodation centres and in institutions who have nowhere to go has increased by 29% from 6,600 in 2005 to 8,500 in 2011. The number of people staying with friends or family increased by 5%. From 4,400 in 2005 to 6,600 in 2011.

For ‘statutory homelessness’, there was an increase of 4% from 52,290 in the tax year 2013-2014 to 54,430 for 2014-2015. The number of people sleeping rough increased by 14% from 2,414 in autumn 2013 to 2,744 in autumn 2014.

### Sources


19 See: http://gov.wales/homelessness/for data on Scotland.


21 See Annex 1.
Among the ten countries that have data on trends, eight indicate an increase in the number of homeless people in recent years. Among possible explanations for this increase are structural problems in housing and labour markets; the functioning of and changes to social protection systems and support services (mental health, asylum, youth, etc.); the impact of the crisis and the austerity measures that resulted; and the weakness of policies aimed at preventing and combating homelessness.

The statistics do not really enable us to determine whether the countries hardest hit by the crisis are experiencing the largest increase in the number of homeless people. Among the countries subject to a Memorandum of Understanding, only Spain publishes data. However, this data focuses on a relatively narrow section of the population and undoubtedly, is not an accurate reflection of the problem. According to NGO reports in Spain, Greece and Portugal, there has been a 25 to 30% increase in demand for homeless services in the aftermath of the crisis. Some countries that had managed to reduce the number of homeless people over the last decade have seen that success slip since the crisis. In the United Kingdom (England), the number of households to which local authorities owed a statutory duty of housing assistance had been continuously falling between 2003/2004 and 2009/2010, dropping from 135,420 to 40,020. The number then started to increase again reaching 54,480 in 2014/2015. It seems likely that welfare reform, particularly in the area of housing allowances, has contributed to the increasing trend. In Spain, the public administration has managed to reduce the number of homeless people through a strategic plan which initially focused on four main cities, before being rolled out across all municipalities.

Statistics concerning homelessness do not always accurately reflect the reality. Their limits, as mentioned above, mean that the number of homeless people is often underestimated. We therefore present our ‘best estimates’ regarding the level of probable precision of the statistics recorded. These ‘best estimates’ are based on the quality and coverage of the data collection systems, and the extent of disagreement on the official figures coming from NGOs working with homeless people in the country. They also take into consideration the general context of social protection. In the ‘best estimates’, we indicate if the figures are, in reality, likely to be ‘higher’ or ‘similar’ to the reported statistics. We have used the term ‘similar, but...’ in cases where the figures are probably close to reality, but where certain clarifications are nonetheless necessary.

The Netherlands and Finland are the only two Member States to report a recent reduction in the number of homeless people. In Finland, the reduction is credited to a programme that aims to end long-term homelessness. It seems that this strategy has helped Finland to address the problem of ‘chronic’ homelessness among people with multiple and complex problems. In the Netherlands, the recent reduction probably results from the end of an increase in homelessness reported due to the recession. Between 2010 and 2012, the total number of homeless people had increased from 23,000 to 27,000. On 1 January 2013, it had fallen again to 25,000. During the previous decade, the Netherlands had managed to reduce the number of homeless people through a strategic plan which initially focused on four main cities, before being rolled out across all municipalities.

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In at least 17 Member States (Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Greece, Hungary, Estonia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and the Czech Republic), the available statistics underestimate the number of homeless people. This reflects the fact that the definitions are narrow, that the geographical coverage is limited (often due to local level of competencies), and that the data is hampered by quality issues and/or the lack of a national data-collection strategy.

With regard to the other 11 Member States (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the statistics are probably more in line with reality. In seven of these countries, there are still significant limits in terms of definitions and/or coverage of the data. For Germany, the statistics do not come from official sources but from an estimate established by the voluntary sector and based on an already outdated study. In France, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom, measuring the number of homeless people with reference to a broader definition and/or providing greater data coverage would give a more complete picture of the situation and would probably show a higher number of homeless people. In Poland, the survey methodology leads to an underestimation of the number of people living rough and to the omission of several categories of supported housing. According to the NGO, the exact number would be closer to 40,000, rather than the 32,000 reported\(^29\). In Spain, the survey methodology only targets municipalities of a certain size and only reaches people who use meal services and accommodation services. The data is similarly limited in Italy. In Ireland, the statistics do not count people living in institutions, in non-conventional housing or with third parties due to lack of housing. In the United Kingdom, and in particular in England, the data tells us more about how the legislation on homelessness works than about their overall situation.

Only four Member States have official statistics that allow a fairly complete picture to be established of the number of homeless people and the trends in homelessness (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden).

The above analysis shows how difficult it is, based on the existing statistics, to accurately compare the number of homeless people in light of wider trends in poverty and social protection. Furthermore a wide range of factors affect the number of homeless people. There is not necessarily a systematic correlation between the level of poverty, the level of social protection and the number of homeless people. This is due in part to the differences in data quality. However, there are also a wide range of additional factors to consider – the housing market, the extent and nature of social housing policies, the employment situation, migration and health contexts, and the existence of effective policies to prevent and resolve homelessness. Another issue is the extent of private solidarity, in particular family structures. Changes in any of these areas can have an impact on the number of homeless people. The exclusion of some groups of people (e.g. young people or migrants) from certain benefits, property bubbles, the closure of care institutions (e.g. psychiatric hospitals) without organising community-based alternatives, migratory flows without adequate political responses, etc. all have profound implications on the size and composition of the homeless population. What is more, well-conceived policies that are well funded and have the necessary political will behind them to deal with homelessness can bring significant results even in difficult contexts.

The relevant comparisons can only be established between countries that have the same quality of information on the homelessness issue. We have chosen to compare the number of homeless people across Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

The statistics above reveal that Sweden reports a greater number of homeless people than its Nordic neighbours which are also EU Member States. Given their relatively similar contexts of social protection, this might seem surprising.

The explanation for this lies partly in the wide use of a ‘secondary housing market’\(^30\), introduced as an interim solution for homeless people while they are preparing to live independently in conventional housing. Tenants in this market are counted in the statistics for homeless people in Sweden but not in Denmark or in Finland.

This difference in definition is explained by the fact that the secondary housing market plays a very significant role in the state’s response to homelessness in Sweden, unlike in the two other countries. Tenants on the secondary housing market often face many obstacles when they want to move on to conventional housing and thus find themselves trapped in the secondary housing market. There has been, as a result of this, a very significant increase in the secondary housing market in recent years. Municipalities often introduce conditions into the leases on this market, for example engagement with social support which can complicate the tenants’ position.

Even taking into consideration the differences in definition, it seems that the level of homelessness is higher in Sweden than in the neighbouring Nordic countries\(^31\). There are several possible explanations for this difference. A major factor could be the recent liberalisation of Sweden’s public housing and its adoption of a more commercial approach. This liberates
lisation resulted in largely putting an end to municipal waiting lists and the referral system, giving municipal social housing companies more control over the allocation of housing. This reform probably works to the detriment of the most vulnerable households, particularly homeless people.

In recent years, both Denmark and Finland have implemented ambitious strategies for improving the situation of homeless people (see the analysis presented in the second part of this chapter). These strategies have led to improved policy coordination and large-scale promotion of Housing First, developed to help people who have complex problems to quickly move into their own home and be supported therein. Caution is nonetheless necessary when judging the impact of such strategies compared to wider structural factors. It does seem credible however that political engagement along with funding has enabled state homeless policies to achieve greater effect in Denmark and Finland than in Sweden, which has not had a coordinated strategy since 2009 (even if the seemingly worse results from Sweden also need to be counterbalanced by the different categorisations and a broader definition of the notion of homelessness which further reinforces the impression of an increase in homelessness).

Even when comparing contexts that have broadly similar social protection systems, factors such as the existence of a robust strategy for combating homelessness and the social housing system, seem to play a significant role in terms of the number of homeless people.

3. THE PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN EUROPE

This chapter is based on the latest comparative studies carried out by the European Observatory on Homelessness in coordination with FEANTSA. We focus on three demographic dimensions: gender, age and the proportion of migrants amongst homeless people.

34. INSEE (2012) op. cit.
35. Bussch-Geertsema, V. et al. (2014) op. cit.
36. 35. INSEE (2012) op. cit.
37. Bussch-Geertsema, V. et al. (2014) op. cit.
40. Bussch-Geertsema, V. et al. (2014) op. cit.

GENDER

According to the statistics, the majority of homeless people in most countries are male. The European Observatory on Homelessness showed that in most of the 15 Member States studied in 2014, 75 to 85% of homeless people are male. Women are nonetheless present within the homeless population and in increasing numbers. The proportion of women is relatively high in France (18%) and in Sweden (16%). In these countries, women staying in shelters for victims of domestic violence are counted as part of the homeless population. The definition of ‘homeless person’ also includes people in longer term housing without a permanent contract. The proportion of women in these two situations is relatively high. The patterns in terms of gender distribution are, in part, a function of the definition of the term ‘homeless people’.

In France, the proportion of women is higher among young homeless people (48% among 18-29 year olds and 31% among those over 50) in several countries like Germany and Iceland, this overlap between young and female homeless people is also observed. The situation of homeless women is often described as relatively invisible. Women are more likely to resort to informal arrangements with friends, family or acquaintances. Recent research carried out in Iceland shows that homeless women tend to avoid homeless accommodation services. Generally speaking, homeless women perhaps use other services more frequently than men. In France, there is a higher representation of homeless women as well as households with children staying in hotels. Some 63% of the homeless people staying in hotels are women. A very small proportion of people sleeping rough (5%) and people staying in night shelters (9%) are women. Conversely, 52% of people staying in housing provided by associations are women. In terms of prevention, in several countries, the social protection systems have specific provisions for households with children which serve in part to protect women exposed to the risk of homelessness. The situation of homeless women is closely linked to the situation of homeless families. The number of families within the homeless population varies from one country to the next, depending on how well-targeted the social welfare and solidarity services are.

YOUNG PEOPLE: MORE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

The available statistics indicate that homeless people in Europe are mostly young people and middle-aged people. In several countries, the 18 to 29 year age bracket is, in general, the highest represented group and makes up almost half of all homeless people. The 18 to 29 year age bracket makes up 20 to 30% of the total number of homeless people in the majority of countries.
Generally, the highest proportion of young people within the homeless population is found in northern and western Europe. Taking account of the specific challenges and life situations of young people, this probably reflects that countries with a narrower definition of homelessness do not adequately capture the magnitude of the housing difficulties encountered by young people. Besides, young adults tend to leave the family home earlier in northern and western Europe than in southern and eastern Europe. The reasons for this phenomenon are complex: the age for setting up home, for getting married, the price of rent and the rates of unemployment are different. Some are examples of this general trend among homeless young people:

- In France and in the Netherlands, about one quarter of homeless people are aged between 18 and 29 years. In Denmark, this age bracket makes up almost one third of homeless people.
- In Hungary and Poland in 2011, only 6% of the homeless population were aged between 20 and 29 years.
- In Spain, where one might expect to see a high number of homeless young people given the context of high youth unemployment due to the crisis, only 16% of the homeless population is aged between 18 and 29 years.
- Italy is an interesting exception: 32% of the homeless population is aged between 18 and 34 years. This age bracket only represents 10% of Italy’s homeless population however. Within the foreign population, this age bracket represents 47%. The influence of migrants, who tend to be young, is very significant in the general age profile of the homeless population in Italy. Only a few countries, like Poland (52%) and Hungary (54%), are seeing an overrepresentation of people over 50 among their homeless population. This probably reflects older people’s insufficient income.

Given the high level of youth unemployment due to the crisis, the growth in the number of homeless young people over the last few years is becoming a major concern in several countries. Young people’s rights to social benefits are becoming increasingly limited which is a significant factor in this worrying trend. In addition, leaving institutional youth care represents a major risk factor for homelessness. The transition to adulthood can be associated with violence, family breakdown, drugs, mental health problems, issues related to sexuality, etc. The most striking example of an increase in the number of homeless young people comes from Denmark, which has seen an 80% increase in homeless people aged 18 to 24 years between 2009 and 2011. During this period, the number has risen from 623 to 1,022. While Member States are indeed acting to deal with issues of youth unemployment and exclusion, particularly within the framework of the ‘Youth Guarantee’, they must also guarantee the establishment of measures to prevent and manage the situation of homeless young people.

MIGRATION

In the majority of Member States, migrants are overrepresented in the homeless population. This seems to be a growing trend, particularly in the EU-15 countries. In 2012, FEANTSA members in 14 out of 21 Member States under review reported an increase in the number of migrants who were homeless.

The term ‘migrant’ does not always carry the same meaning in different contexts. Migrants can be asylum seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status, people whose residence permit has expired, people waiting to be sent back to their country of origin, and EU citizens exercising their right to free movement. Migrants can be exposed to the risk of finding themselves homeless for different reasons. The administrative status given to them by the host country is the determining factor in their access to work, to social welfare allowances and in some countries, to basic services such as shelters. Migrants and people with immigrant backgrounds can find themselves facing discrimination in the housing market. Furthermore, institutional factors such as employment-related restrictions for migrants can expose them to the risk of becoming homeless.

Countries on the borders of Europe, transit countries, and countries with a larger number of migrants in the wider population, have a high level of migrants among the homeless population. In Italy, the majority of people recorded in a 2011 survey on the situation of homeless people were foreign nationals (60%). In Greece, despite the absence of official statistics, it is clear that many migrants are homeless. In Spain, the most recent survey on homelessness showed that 46% of the 12,100 homeless respondents were foreign nationals. Among them, more than half (56%) were African. France has a relatively high proportion of foreign nationals within its homeless population. This figure rose from 30% in 2001 to 52% in 2012. As the issue of the common EU asylum policy has become central in the context of massive influxes, Member States are debating the possibility of a quota system. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of people are facing living conditions that, without a doubt, constitute homelessness and which highlight the manifest lack of adequate reception capacity.

Even in countries where a large majority of the homeless population is made up of nationals, an overrepresentation of migrants can be observed. In Finland, for example, migrants represented 26% of the homeless population in 2013 but just 5% of the general population. Since 2009, a 273% increase in the number of homeless migrants can be observed (from 532 to 1,986 people).

EU citizens from other Member States are increasingly being observed in the homeless population of the EU15. In London, almost 13% of the people sleeping rough come from central and eastern European countries (the ‘A10’ countries - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). In certain areas of Paris, up to 40% of users of homeless services come from eastern Europe. In the absence of a clear EU framework on the rights of EU citizens to access basic services, Member States have developed divergent approaches to the issue. Some countries, like Denmark, refuse people without residence rights access to emergency accommodation.

An increasing number of Member States have developed programmes to help repatriate people to their country of origin. The question remains however as to the extent that people who find themselves in such a vulnerable position as sleeping rough can exercise free choice with regard to these programmes. Besides, the situation that these people find themselves in on return to their country of origin is highly unpredictable.

In certain rural contexts, seasonal farm workers live in situations that constitute homelessness. For example, there are encampments and non-conventional dwellings without proper sanitary facilities in Spain and Italy’s agricultural regions.
In the EU, a growing number of Member States have announced the establishment of integrated strategies to combat homelessness. In 2010, a European consensus conference on homelessness concluded that putting an end to homelessness is possible and we must gradually work towards this, expressing for the first time a consensus on this aim i.e. it is not about managing these problems but about solving them. To achieve this, the consensus conference recommended all Member States develop integrated strategies at local and national level. While the ‘frontline’ in combating homelessness is at local level, national strategies can provide a general framework to support advancement. The European Commission called on all Member States to develop such strategies.

Eleven countries announced the creation of national strategies to combat homelessness in recent years - the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. How this is put into action very much depends on the context:

- Strategies that seem to have had a significant impact both during the period of the strategy and after, in Denmark, Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands and Scotland55. The Netherlands, Finland and Scotland all have seen a reduction in at least one form of homelessness which can, at least in part, be attributed to these strategies.
- Strategies that are too early to judge because they are still in their initial stages, for example in Spain (in the finalisation phase), the Czech Republic, Luxembourg and Wales.
- Strategies that have become obsolete due to not being adequately implemented or funded. In Sweden, where there has not been a national strategy since 2009, in Portugal where the strategy was never properly funded or implemented by the government.
- Strategies that in the past produced results but that have since been downgraded. England implemented a relatively exhaustive strategy including a ringfenced budget to support municipalities address homelessness, the system of statutory assistance for homeless people, and coordination with social landlords. The joint work of these authorities meant progress was made between 1990 and 2000. The number of homeless people started to rise again with the financial crisis and since the budget for homeless services was cut, housing assistance and welfare benefits were capped and the legislation-based strategy net for homeless people was weakened.
- Strategies for which it is hard to gauge the state of progress. France made combating homelessness a national priority for the period 2008-2012, presenting a range of objectives and actions. Among these objectives was the implementation of a full evaluation of the supply and demand for shelters and housing in all départements; a reduction in the number of hotel nights by 10,000 in three years and the provision of 13,000 alternatives, the construction of 150,000 social housing units, with a section of them earmarked as ‘very social’ housing. At this point, the programme has not been clearly followed up, and the funding fell far short of producing a supply of social housing accessible to people on very low incomes, in spite of this being the official key point of ‘Housing First’.

1. Evidence-based approach
Understanding the problem of housing exclusion is the essential starting point. In practice, this consists of having a good data-collection strategy; using research and analysis to direct policy decisions; regularly revising policies on the basis of evidence about emerging needs and about the effectiveness of the measures taken. Example: Denmark systematically uses evidence to develop and evaluate its policy on a continuous basis. This is done through detailed follow-up and an evaluation of the strategies in order to continuously direct the policymaking process.

2. Comprehensive approach
A comprehensive approach includes a good balance between the emergency responses, resettlement and reintegration of homeless people along with prevention of homelessness. In many countries, prevention, resettlement and reintegration are underdeveloped compared to emergency responses. As a consequence, the strategy must aim to find a balance in its approach so that its reach is more comprehensive.

Example: In its strategy, Ireland has an approach that is ‘housing-led’. This means it is deliberately focused on housing. The emphasis is on quickly providing secure housing with, if necessary, support in order to guarantee a sustainable rental property.

FEANTSA identified ten elements for an integrated strategy to combat homelessness. Figure 4.2 summarises these, giving a few short examples from different Member States56.

Ten elements from the FEANTSA toolkit for developing an integrated strategy to combat homelessness.

1. Evidence-based approach
2. Comprehensive approach
3. Consensus process
4. Strong commitment
5. Struggling for the funding
6. Key roles and responsibilities
7. Empowering the client
8. Monitoring and evaluation
9. Strong regional and local levels
10. Integrated actions and strategies.
## Multi-dimensional approach

A multi-dimensional approach involves integrating the housing, health, employment and education angles. This also assumes that the different services work together and that there is cross-sector cooperation in the provision of services. Interdepartmental cooperation is another important aspect of the multi-dimensional approach.

**Example:** The implementation of a new strategy in the Czech Republic was monitored by an interdepartmental working group on preventing and combating homelessness. This working group is made up of representatives from the departments involved as well as members of an expert group. It is too early to judge the operational success of the Czech approach but a large number of the countries with an advanced strategy have developed a multi-dimensional approach with oversight mechanisms to ensure its functioning.

## Rights-based approach

A rights-based approach consists of promoting access to decent, stable housing as an indispensible pre-condition to exercising most of the other fundamental rights. In practice, this means using housing rights as a basis for the strategy, focusing on the enforceable right to housing and recognising the interdependence of the right to housing and other rights such as the right to live in dignity and the right to health.

**Example:** the DALO law (law no. 2007-290 of 5 March 2007) in France enabled the introduction of an enforceable right to housing. People who are homeless, inadequately housed, or who have waited more than three years for social housing can demand the right to be rehoused by the State. The law provides the right to housing to people who are not managing to rehouse themselves (known as Section 110 accommodation) can exercise influence on the regulation of the organisation and services. This led to the establishment of users’ committees within shelters. These committees are also made up at regional level and since 2001, a national users’ committee has been in place (SAND). SAND plays an active role in the development of policies.

## Statutory approach

A statutory approach is a strategy to combat homelessness underpinned by legislation. The existence of a legal framework at local/regional level brings coherence at both levels. The regulatory objectives also enable support for effective monitoring and evaluation of policy progress.

**Example:** Scotland’s basis for its strategy to combat homelessness is the 2001 (Scottish) law on housing and the 2003 (Scottish) law on homelessness. Since the end of 2012, all households that are unintentionally homeless have the right to settle accommodation provided by the local authority. This has put an end to the long-standing distinction that was made between households with ‘priority needs’ and others. The criteria for priority needs meant that local authorities were only obliged to provide a home for households that met the specific criteria for vulnerability. By amending its legislation, Scotland enlarged the ambition of its policy to combat homelessness and, in so doing, created a right to housing for all households that find themselves unintentionally homeless.

## Participatory approach

This means total involvement of the stakeholders concerned in the strategic development of policies. It includes homeless people, the service workers and officials who work with them, policymakers and others. All stakeholders concerned must be involved in policy development, evaluation and implementation. This is to ensure development of the appropriate structures.

**Example:** Denmark has a legal basis for the participation of homeless people in decisions that affect their lives. The law on social services stipulates that local authorities must guarantee that all users of shelters (known as Section 110 accommodation) can exercise influence on the organisation and services. This led to the establishment of users’ committees within shelters. These committees are also made up at regional level and since 2001, a national users’ committee has been in place (SAND). SAND plays an active role in the development of policies.

## Sustainable approach

A sustainable approach can be ensured through adequate funding, financial objectives based on a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the situation of homeless people, their needs, changes in the housing and employment market and other areas. It is necessary, in order to create a credible basis for progress, as well as to establish a clear and realistic schedule with medium- and long-term objectives.

**Example:** Finland, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland stand out as countries that have set specific, measurable objectives as part of their strategy to combat homelessness on the basis of an in-depth evaluation of the context.

## Pragmatic approach

A pragmatic approach consists of setting realistic and achievable objectives based on a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the situation of homeless people, their needs, changes in the housing and employment market and other areas. It is necessary, in order to create a credible basis for progress, as well as to establish a clear and realistic schedule with medium- and long-term objectives.

**Example:** Local authorities play a central role in the development and implementation of the strategies and that services are developed as close as possible to their end-users. In several countries, we are currently seeing a dangerous trend whereby the competencies for homelessness are being decentralised without a sufficient transfer of resources. This is not really a bottom-up approach but rather reveals the failure of the State in playing its role as facilitator.

**Example:** phase one of the Dutch strategy was focused on the four largest cities in the period from 2008 to 2013. It was based on a detailed needs analysis and a commitment to a user-centred approach with individualised step-by-step plans, and individual case management. Some 10,000 homeless people were identified and, based on their needs, an individual response was sought for each of them. This response brings with it income, accommodation, an individual care plan and, as far as possible, a realistic form of employment.
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CHAP. 2

HOMELINESS IN THE E.U.: A SERIOUS SITUATION BUT NOT A HOPELESS ONE.

59

THE RISK OF ‘WINDOW DRESSINGS’

Do these national strategies, which are growing in number across Europe, demonstrate a genuine desire to progressively improve the conditions for homeless people? There is a risk that such strategies are little more than ‘window dressing’ or ‘smoke and mirrors’.

‘Paper strategies’ are ones with good intentions but that are not adequately underpinned by evidence, resources, political commitment, legislation, a legal base, complete understanding of the problem or other necessary elements to ensure their success. A surprising number of strategies recently published by EU Member States do not even specify in concrete terms the resources that will be allocated to ensure implementation.

Another important element is the continuity of the strategies – what seemed to be strong commitment to the rights of homeless people, France’s problems in effectively implementing the DALO law are an example of this. There were almost 60,000 households recognised as ‘priority’ waiting for housing in 2014. According to a recent judgement by the European Court of Human Rights because it did not implement a decision for three and a half years, requiring that housing be allocated in accordance with the DALO law.

In concrete terms, the problem lies in using criteria based on having residency status and without giving consideration to other limiting criteria related to local connection, age, etc. The Committee stated, furthermore, that the community must provide legal residents with either long-term accommodation suitable for their situation or housing of an appropriate standard. These examples show both that it is necessary to follow up closely on the implementation of homeless policies and that human rights legislation can play a role in this regard.

The commitment expressed within the framework of the integrated strategies may be undermined by regressive or even criminalising measures. Even in cases where governments develop integrated strategies to combat homelessness, these policies can be undermined by local, regional or even national policies that criminalise and penalise homeless people.

FINLAND: CASE STUDY OF AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

Finland’s recent programmes aiming to end long-term homelessness - Paavo I and Paavo II - are an interesting case study in integrated strategies. These programmes were the subject of an in-depth evaluation (Culhane et al 2016), the main elements of which are summarised here.

Overview

Finnish programme to reduce the number of long-term homeless people 2008-2011 (Paavo I) and to end long-term homelessness 2011-2015 (Paavo II).

Scope

Focus on the ten largest centres of urban growth with Helsinki being the biggest priority. Housing first was the central concept that underpinned the whole strategy.

Objectives

The objective of the 2008-2011 phase was to reduce by half the number of long-term homeless people and to develop more effective prevention measures with regard to homelessness. There was a quantitative objective to provide 1,250 housing places, supported accommodation units and places in care centres for homeless people. The objective of the 2011-2015 phase was to end homelessness through the provision of 1,250 extra apartments and flexible support services.

Responsibilities

The Ministry of the Environment coordinated the programme in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) and the Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY) which part-financed the programme. Implementation was carried out through signed letters of intent with the municipalities.

Resources

At least EUR 300 million for the entire programme coming from the central government, municipalities and RAY.

Results

During these programmes, 2,500 housing units were built and 360 extra social workers were employed to help homeless people. The number of long-term homeless people has fallen by 1,200 since 2008. It is also estimated that prevention has helped 200 more people per year avoid ending up sleeping rough.

Some noteworthy points from the evaluation of this policy

The convergence of objectives

The property market: the insufficient supply of affordable housing for rent has a bearing on all policies combating homelessness. A programme aiming to convert homeless shelters into proper housing.

The prevention of evictions, with the help of housing-related advice and assistance and help to find alternative housing if evicted:

• Housing First and the related support services.

Housing-related advice and support services

A central point of the homelessness prevention policy. As an example, in 2012-2013 in Helsinki, 16,000 households were advised on housing matters and 280 evictions were cancelled due to this support. It is estimated that between 2001 and 2008, these services helped reduce evictions in Helsinki by 32%.

The support services also represent an important cornerstone for better social integration. These services, which are provided to people with housing, enable links to be made with other social services but also provide users with indispensable support (psychiatric, health, etc.). They enable housing to be secured for a longer period and studies, comparing it with other countries (United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), show that support that decreases in intensity is an appropriate method.

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FEANTSA v. The Netherlands

(collective complaint 86/2013 and 90/2013)

THE FOUNDAÇÃO ABBE PIERRE - FEANTSA | AN OVERVIEW OF HOUSING EXCLUSION IN EUROPE 2015
Comprehensiveness

It is important to put the most recent programmes in context within the Paavo I and Paavo II strategies. Finland saw an increase in the number of homeless people in the 1980s and implemented a series of policy measures, in particular increasing the number of affordable social housing units with the aim of improving the situation. In 2008, when Paavo I entered into force, Finland had already reduced the rate of homelessness to a relatively minor social problem, i.e. the number of homeless people was among the lowest in Europe. Unquestionably, homelessness resulting from a structural lack of housing, mainly linked to economic factors and the provision of affordable housing, had largely been resolved. While the population of homeless people was 18,000 at the end of the 1980s, this figure had fallen to 8,000 in 2008 and the Paavo programmes were established to further reduce this figure.

An essential point is that the first phase, Paavo I, was focused on the situation of long-term homelessness, often associated with co-morbidity of serious mental health problems and alcohol/drug problems. This focus was chosen because it was found that the existing services were not leading to a reduction in the number of long-term homeless people to the point that it can now be considered a minor social problem. The number of homeless people is currently so low that although it has not been eradicated, only a very small minority of Finnish people are likely to find themselves homeless and, if they do find themselves at risk of it, it is likely that they will not be long-term. Maintaining this positive situation nonetheless requires continuous work, and ongoing efforts need to be made with particular attention being given to emerging needs such as those of homeless families and homeless migrants.

The continuity of a results-focused policy also seems to be an important element. Finland’s national homelessness strategy was established in the 1980s, coordinating housing, health and social policies within the framework of decentralising the implementation of this national objective. The strategy was supported by a significant budget, but also indicators to prove the social effectiveness of the spending. Thus policy was very effective: the number of homeless people sleeping in shelters, institutions, outside or in hotels decreased from 10,000 in 1985 to 2,000 in 2012.

Coordination

Political support was carefully and systematically worked on, the central government co-operated with the municipalities, requiring them to sign letters of intent committing them to the strategy. The coordination guaranteed the cooperation of the voluntary sector, social landlords and Foundation Y (Finland’s main social housing provider).

Evidence based

The Finns learned the lessons from their own experience regarding effective design of services and decided to remodel their existing services for long-term homeless people to move towards what they called a ‘Housing First’ approach. Finland independently arrived at a Housing First-type model, but once they realised that there was a close link to what was happening in other countries, they actively set about learning more about the North American and European experiences.

Although Finland took some of the lessons learned from examples abroad, they were adapted to its specific national context. Finland pragmatically decided to extensively use existing buildings to provide permanent apartments to homeless people. In particular in the first phase of the programme, large buildings (notably some of the existing emergency accommodation) were transformed into apartments occupied solely by users of Housing First services with staff on site. This was a source of controversy because one of the key principles of Housing First was the use of dispersed accommodation. It is nonetheless important to stress that Finland also used a lot of ordinary apartments, within communities, and mobile support that was less intense. The grouped living solutions have proved to be well suited to certain needs. The programme was carefully evaluated and monitored during and after its implementation. The number of long-term homeless people fell, both in absolute and in relative terms. There were 25% fewer long-term homeless people in 2013 than in 2008 and the proportion of long-term homeless people fell from 45% to 36%. The objective of reducing the number of long-term homeless people by 50% by 2011 was not reached nor was the subsequent objective of completely eradicating long-term homelessness by 2015. However, the figures were reduced and have remained very low.

In 2014, Finland asked a panel of international experts, who worked alongside a Finnish expert, to examine the effectiveness of their national strategy. The group’s conclusions were that although some problems had not yet been resolved and that the situation of long-term homeless people was very low in comparison to other EU Member States and other OECD countries. The combination of preventive services, increasing access to the affordable and mainstream housing and, as well as specific strategies to meet the needs of people with complex needs, particularly the long-term homeless and others like former prisoners facing a lack of housing, was deemed to be very effective. The long-term commitment to end homelessness in Finland is still in place with a third phase to the national strategy being planned. The Finnish strategy was characterised by a willingness to set, examine and externally evaluate strategic objectives. Finland was also broadly inspired by other countries’ good practice and stressed the importance of communicating and sharing the Finnish plans along with both positive results and problems encountered. One of the results of the continuous review process is that the characteristics of Finland’s homeless population are changing and the country is starting to adapt to this. For example, a greater number of young homeless people are being seen and there has been a shift among long-term homeless people, from alcoholism to multiple drug addictions.

Sustainability

Finland is committed, on an ongoing basis, to the prevention and reduction of homelessness. This country is making sustained political effort and devoting significant resources to its national strategy. It is widely accepted that systematic effort aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness will be necessary in order to keep the numbers low. Finland has unquestionably been reduced to the point that it can now be considered a minor social problem. The number of homeless people is currently so low that although it has not been eradicated, only a very small minority of Finnish people are likely to find themselves homeless and, if they do find themselves at risk of it, it is likely that they will not be long-term. Maintaining this positive situation nonetheless requires continuous work, and ongoing efforts need to be made with particular attention being given to emerging needs such as those of homeless families and homeless migrants.

Finland offers an excellent example of a truly coordinated, exhaustive and especially effective response to the situation of homeless people. Of course, this strategy must be viewed in the context of a rich country with a robust social protection system and a relatively low level of immigration. Although caution is required and the fall in the number of homeless people should not be solely attributed to this strategy, it does seem to have had a transformative effect.
**ANNEX 1**

**REFERENCES FOR MEMBER STATES’ STATISTICS**

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**HOMELESSNESS IN THE E.U.: A SERIOUS SITUATION BUT NOT A HOPELESS ONE.**

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**PORTUGAL**


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**SLOVAKIA**


**SLOVENIA**


**SPAIN**


**SWEDEN**


**UNITED KINGDOM**


**DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL CARE AND JOBS**

### Housing Exclusion in Europe: The Key Statistics

- **203,171,221** Number of Households in the European Union
- **24,177,375** Difficulty accessing public transport (11.9% of the European population)
- **6,501,479** Rent or mortgage arrears (3.2%)
- **21,942,491** Difficulty maintaining adequate household temperature (10.8%)
- **11,174,417** At risk of having to move house in the next six months due to housing costs (5.5%)
- **35,148,621** Overcrowded housing (17.3%)
- **10,564,903** Severe housing deprivation (5.2%)
- **10,564,903** Homeless (Number unknown)

*Source: EuroStat*

A household constitutes all the inhabitants of the same dwelling. The population of Europe is 508.1 million people for 203.2 households, so 2.5 people on average per household. But it would be rash to extrapolate housing difficulties by number of people on the basis of this average. The figures cannot be simply added together because a single household may be affected by several housing difficulties.

**Photo credits:** Peredniankina, Javi Indy, Twin Design, Sarah Jane Taylor (Shutterstock), Fatykhov (Fotolia)
TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN EUROPE ARE EXPERIENCING HOUSING EXCLUSION

Who are they? How did they end up there? What do we know about homelessness? What does European legislation and case law have to say about the right to housing?

These are the questions addressed in this Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, which reveals a rise in the number of homeless people in the majority of countries, the impact of the crisis on home ownership, the particular difficulties experienced by central and southern European countries, the differences in how countries manage evictions and more.

Some problems are local and so the responses should also be local. However, certain issues are emerging at a European level, some instruments exist at European level, and some solutions can only be found at European level.

First and foremost, we can learn from each other: how Austria has succeeded in abolishing rental evictions, how Scotland manages to guarantee housing, how Finland has reformed its emergency accommodation services for much greater effectiveness.

From our shared problems, we can build common tools that will provide solutions: a regulatory framework, financial resources, stakeholder training, and citizen mobilisation. Greater understanding of the issues and knowledge-sharing are necessary to better adapt the future tools to needs.

We hope that this document represents the first step towards future solutions: the European contribution to combating housing exclusion.