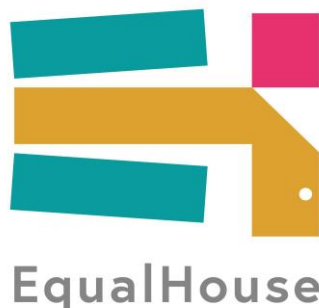**HORIZON-CL2-2023-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09**

EqualHouse

Housing Inequalities Profile

Chapter 8: Homelessness and Acute Housing Exclusion in Europe

Lead author(s): Dora Welker[a]

[a]FEANTSA, Brussels, Belgium

Contents

Tables

Figures

1.1 Introduction

The issue of adequate and affordable housing is increasingly a focal point in European policy discussions, with homelessness identified as the most urgent and severe manifestation of housing exclusion. This challenge extends beyond the individuals directly affected, impacting the broader society. Housing exclusion detrimentally affects health, well-being, dignity, and life opportunities, while undermining public health and social cohesion. FEANTSA estimates approximately 1,287,000 individuals (ETHOS 1-3) to be homeless in Europe, as well as 400,000 children (Horvat, 2024; Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024). While this figure is a statistical estimate, and not without criticism regarding its robustness, it underscores the vast scale of the problem and its evident increases in the recent decade (Michelangeli et al., 2024). Alongside increases in overall numbers, the profile of the homelessness population is also shifting, with increasing numbers of children, migrants, Roma, and other vulnerable populations experiencing severe housing exclusion (Michelangeli et al., 2024).

Monitoring homelessness is essential (Coego et al., 2004). Reliable, rigorous, and comparable data on homelessness are needed for effective resource allocation, and evidence-based policymaking. Estimating the scale and distribution of homelessness helps evaluate the success of prior policies (Michelangeli et al., 2024).

However, accurately profiling this population is complicated by limited data availability and differing definitions of homelessness. Variations in service provision, definitional frameworks, and local contexts significantly influence the measurement and understanding of homelessness. In recent years, substantial progress has been made in the measurement of homelessness across the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK). While there is still room for improvement, we now have a clearer understanding of the scale and nature of homelessness and housing exclusion. Initiatives such as the ETHOS and ETHOS Light typologies, which a large part of new studies on homelessness in the European context now utilise (Horvat, 2024), combined with advancements in data collection methods, have improved our ability to operationalise and quantify homelessness on both national and international levels.

This chapter aims to add to this evidence base, and to address some of the remaining challenges in profiling homelessness by integrating data from different sources and carefully considering how the numbers were collected, to provide a more accurate picture. By collating various data sources, we aim to bridge the gaps left by individual methodologies, i.e. by combining data sources, we aim to move closer to an accurate representation of homelessness in the EU and UK. Throughout the chapter we will map results onto the ETHOS Light typology, as best as possible. We will offer some explanations for homelessness as a phenomenon, related to welfare systems and trends over time.

While statistical figures offer valuable insights, they must be interpreted with caution, as they are deeply intertwined with the specific local contexts in which they are produced. This complexity complicates international comparisons and underscores the importance of a careful, context-sensitive approach to the dissemination and interpretation of homelessness data across borders.

1.2 Measuring Homelessness

1.2.1 Types of data that can be collected on homelessness

Data on homelessness come from various sources. Homelessness is measured using a range of methods designed to capture different aspects of the homeless population (Coego et al., 2004). For data collection and analysis, researchers distinguish between stock, flow, and prevalence when measuring homelessness. *Stock* refers to the number of individuals experiencing homelessness at a specific point in time; *flow* captures those who have either become homeless or exited homelessness within a given period; and *prevalence* reflects the total number of individuals who have experienced homelessness at any point during a specified timeframe (Busch-Geertsema, 2010).

Major data sources on homelessness generally include: 1) administrative records; 2) specialised data collection efforts focused on homelessness; and 3) general population surveys. Administrative data are collected by different institutions or service providers (e.g. social services) and can be used to identify homelessness. Targeted methods include street counts, service-based methods,

capture-recapture, and information-management systems on homeless individuals (Coego et al., 2004). Street counts or other point-in-time estimates count homeless individuals rough sleeping at a specific time-period. Service-based methods rely on data collected from homelessness service providers. Capture-recapture compares different data sources to estimate homelessness. Finally, information management systems on homeless individuals can be used to collect information on individuals experiencing homelessness (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024). More broad data sources include population censuses, and national or international household surveys. These sample the overall population at a given point in time and may or may not include different categories of homeless individuals (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024). These can be helpful in capturing housing instability within the wider population. Each method offers different strengths, some better suited to immediate counts and others suited to unveil long-term trends and hidden homelessness. Regardless, different methods can generate very different outcomes (O'Sullivan et al., 2020).

When comparing national statistics, it is essential to differentiate between *point-in-time (PIT) (stock)* and *flow* data. The latter will yield higher overall numbers. The map below from FEANTSA and FAP indicates the former in green, and the latter in red. In addition, several countries are marked as yellow, for having either dated or insufficiently robust data.

Figure 1.Count types

COUNT TYPES
CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE METHOD USED AND QUALITY OF DATA COLLECTED

- Point-in-time count
- Flow data recording
- Dated or insufficiently robust survey
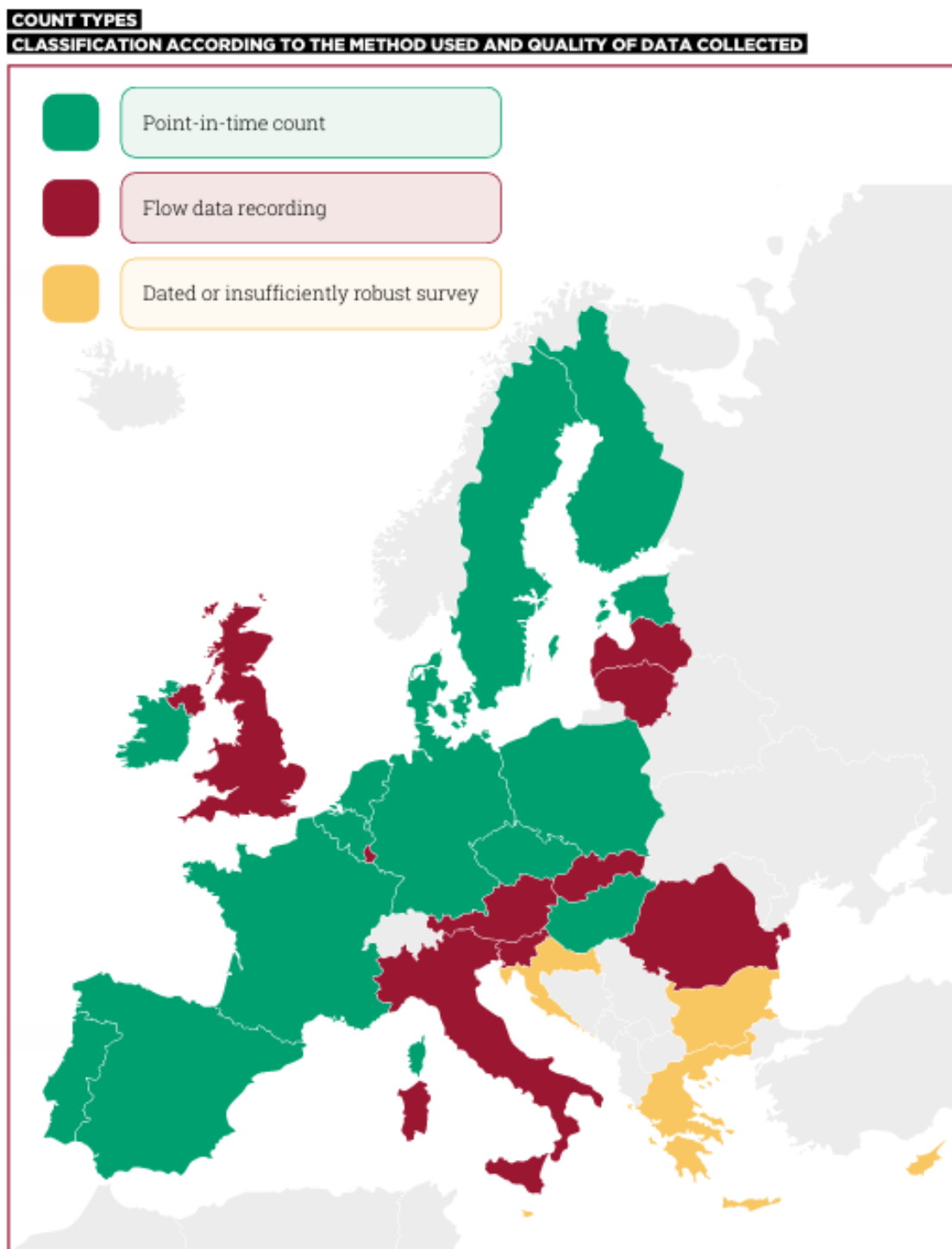
Source: Ninth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, 2024

Certain groups are often excluded from official homelessness statistics, contributing to what is known as hidden homelessness. Individuals not in contact with support services and those ineligible for services can be missing from official

7

statistics. Authors have pointed to 'hidden' homelessness as a bias in statistics (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). For example, women may be hidden from accommodation services and statistics if they stay temporarily with friends, family, partners, or in squats (Reeve et al., 2006). Additionally, different types of homelessness enumeration methods are likely to over- or underestimate distinct population groups. Street-counts are likely to under-count women, for example (Bretherton & Mayock, 2021; London Councils et al., 2023). When methodologies are elaborated with a gender-sensitive lens, substantially more female rough sleepers are counted (Wright et al., 2024). Overall, current numbers likely also underestimate migrants and youth, who may try to 'fly under the radar' (Coego et al., 2004). There is, however, increased debate regarding the usefulness of the hidden homelessness term for research (Pleace & Hermans, 2020).

1.2.2 Challenges with data comparisons

Key challenges persist in the effort to measure homelessness, particularly regarding what is measured and how it is measured.

Figure 2. Challenges with data comparison
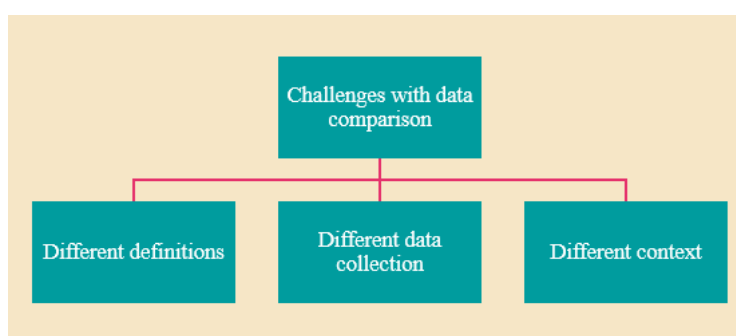
Several factors complicate international comparisons of homelessness. Different definitions of homelessness across and even within countries lead to significant discrepancies in reported figures (OECD - Social Policy Division -

Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024). As noted in the introduction, the definition of homelessness can vary greatly from one country to another, impacting how homelessness both is understood and measured. Data is strongly impacted by definitions of homelessness, e.g. Denmark or Finland count more 'hidden' homelessness, whereas other states may focus exclusively on visible rough sleeping.

Countries also vary in data collection methods, ranging from administrative records to surveys and censuses, resulting in differing levels of reliability and robustness. Higher recorded rates of homelessness do not always indicate a larger homeless population but may reflect more comprehensive data collection (Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024), or a greater focus on addressing homelessness. Flow versus point-in-time data also cannot be directly compared (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024).

The availability of homeless services and temporary accommodation in a country also affects the visibility of homelessness, shaping the figures reported. Countries with more extensive or accessible services may report higher numbers, not necessarily because homelessness is more prevalent, but because their services and outreach are better equipped to identify and address them. Finally, substantial differences in context, such as rural versus urban homelessness, can distort overall national statistics, obscuring significant variations within countries. These factors underline the importance of interpreting homelessness data with caution when making international comparisons.

Against this background, the ETHOS Light definition addresses some of these inconsistencies in national methods related to homelessness by standardising data collection (Coego et al., 2004). By providing a common language and breaking down a varied phenomenon into more measurable and definable sub-categories, ETHOS light can aid cross-national comparisons. This is a tool that is increasingly used in national surveys, alongside increased methodological harmonisation to create substantial progress in the measurement of homelessness (Horvat, 2024).

9

This report will also use ETHOS Light to facilitate cross-national comparisons and to help bridge the gap caused by varying national definitions and methodologies.

1.3 Available data sources

Four key data sources will be utilised to provide a European comparison of homelessness and housing exclusion at the European level:

1. National homelessness surveys, point-in-time counts and national statistics, collated within FEANTSA and FAP's annual Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe (2016-2024);
2. The OECD's Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH);
3. The 2021 European Population and Housing Census; and
4. European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).

The first three provide *overall country estimates*, sometimes broken down by ETHOS Light categories. EU-SILC, on the other hand, provides a retrospective look at the percentage of the total population who have experienced various forms of housing deprivation *in their lifetimes*.

Table 1. Different data sources on homelessness

Data source	ETHOS Light coverage	Indicators	Timeframe
FEANTSA and FAP	Country dependent		Point-in-time or Flow, depending on the country
OECD QuASH	Country dependent		
2021 Census	Totals only and occasionally ETHOS Light 1 can be isolated provided in metadata	Sex, age, Current activity status, Size of locality, Place of birth, Country of citizenship, Year of arrival in the country, Residence year before	
EU-SILC	Ethos Light 1, 2-3, 5 and 6, (retrospective) ETHOS Light 6 (current)	Sex, age, risk of poverty or social exclusion, temporary solution, country of birth, current country of citizenship, reason for homelessness, reason for overcoming homelessness	Point-in-time of current homelessness, Prevalence data on retrospective experiences

By synthesizing and cross-referencing these data sources, we seek to refine our understanding and produce a more comprehensive estimate of homelessness and housing exclusion. For each source, we will discuss both measurement issues and explanatory analysis.

1.3.1 Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe

For the past nine years, FEANTSA and FAP have produced an annual Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe. The latest national and international statistics and data are identified, collated, and synthesised to provide a comprehensive look at homeless and housing exclusion across Member States. The data come from various national statistics sources, including point-in-time counts (PIT), extrapolations, recordings, and surveys. The data are then disaggregated and reorganised to fit within ETHOS Light categories, wherever possible (Horvat, 2024).

The amplest available data pertain to ETHOS Light categories 2-3, individuals in emergency and temporary homeless accommodation. Ten countries also provide data on ETHOS 1, unsheltered homelessness. Much less is known about ETHOS Light categories 4-6, e.g. very few countries collect official statistics on individuals in institutions who are facing homelessness.

Since 2023, FEANTSA and FAP have published European estimates of homelessness (Horvat, 2024). Based on countries with reliable PIT data, the estimate is then a full population-based extrapolation for all of Europe for ETHOS Light 1-3 (Horvat, 2024). The 2024 report estimates that there are approximately 1,287,000 people in Europe who are rough sleeping or housed only in emergency shelters or reception and support centres (Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024). This is an increase from last year, particularly in Belgium and Germany (Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024). Increases are explained by both an objective rise in homelessness, as well as by improvements in the accuracy and coverage of data collection in certain countries (Horvat, 2024).

Figure 3. Statistics from recent surveys, count types, and details by ETHOS Light category

Country	Source	Method	Date	Period	ETHOS 1	ETHOS 2	ETHOS 3	ETHOS 4	ETHOS 5	ETHOS 6	Other	Total
Austria	Statistik Austria	Recording	2022	1 year								19,667
Belgium	Bruss'help / FRB & Administrations régionales	Count / Extrapolation	2022 - 2023	1 night	2,328	2,484	12,566	3,588	7,827	13,475	3,592	45,860
Czechia	SocioFactor	Count / Extrapolation	2022	4 months	12,000		18,426		16,058	54,244		100,728
Denmark	VIVE	Count	2022	1 week	535	248	2,955	195		1,152	704	5,789
Estonia	Eesti Statistika	Count	2021	1 night								1,068
Finland	Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus	Count	2022	1 night	464		414	412		2,139		3,429
France	Fondation Abbé Pierre	Count	2021	1 night		166,331	42,743					209,074
Germany	Destatis / GISS & Kantar Public	Count / Survey	2022 - 2023	1 night / 1 week	32,467	8,280	363,780			52,033		456,560
Hungary	Menhely Alapítvány	Count	2023	1 night	1,530		5,738					7,268
Ireland	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Count	2023	1 week			13,318					13,318
Italy	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica	Recording	2021	1 year								96,197
Latvia	Labklājības ministrija	Recording	2022	1 year			5,997					5,997
Lithuania	Statistics Lithuania	Recording	2022	1 year			4,317					4,317
Luxembourg	Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région	Recording	2022	1 year		445	251					696
Netherlands	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek	Count / Extrapolation	2023	1 night								30,600
Poland	Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej	Count	2019	1 night	2,551	4,299	16,962	3,062	3,456			30,330
Portugal	ENIPSSA	Count	2022	1 night	5,975		4,798					10,773
Romania	Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale	Recording	2022	1 year		1,053	840					1,893
Slovakia	Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny	Recording	2020	1 year		7,609	3,052					10,661
Slovenia	Inštitut Republike Slovenije za Socialno varstvo	Recording	2021	1 year			1,239					1,239
Spain	Instituto Nacional de Estadística	Count / Extrapolation	2022	6 weeks	4,508	11,498			5,478		7,068	28,552
Sweden	Socialstyrelsen	Count	2023	1 week								27,383
UK	Crisis	Recording / Extrapolation	2019	1 year	17,042	46,875	22,371		18,556	137,588		242,432

Demographics

Each year the Overview data looks more in depth at a particular element or sub-population of homelessness. In 2024, special attention was given to age. The data are very fragmented in the under 18 population (Horvat, 2024), however, in 2024 FEANTSA and FAP have also provided a more thorough breakdown by age. In addition to the over two million homeless adult individuals, there are also around 400 000 minors (Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024). Rough sleeping data on minors are available in Belgium, France, and Germany, where 44, 1990, and 1121 minors were counted, respectively. In the UK, tens of thousands of children are housed in emergency accommodation.

1.3.2 OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH)

Section 5 of the OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH) focuses on homelessness and housing exclusion. This section gathers information on various aspects, including national homelessness strategies, data, and definitions of homelessness (with breakdowns by gender, age, migrants, humanitarian migrants, LGBTQI+ individuals, and families with children). It also requests data categorised by ETHOS light definitions, where available, and information on places in homeless accommodations. Additionally, the questionnaire explores national approaches to data collection on homelessness, evictions from rental housing (including evictions initiated, issues faced, and those carried out), homelessness prevention measures, and the sharing of best practices. Based on these data, the OECD has published individual country fiches on homelessness in its Member States, covering all EU-countries except Bulgaria and Malta, with only partial information available for Hungary. These fiches provide specific analyses on various aspects, including homelessness trends, housing deprivation, and homelessness strategies. As in the FEANTSA and FAP dataset, data are disaggregated into ETHOS Light categories, where possible (Horvat, 2024). Again, ETHOS Light 2-3, followed by ETHOS Light 1, are more commonly measure

Demographics

The OECD divides countries' homelessness data by ETHOS Light categories and gender. Most countries report (often substantially) higher percentages of homeless men than women, with the exception of the UK where 67% of the homeless population is female (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024). Some of this difference is explained by measurement differences. As the below indicates, countries which define homelessness more narrowly (e.g. rough sleeping only), report smaller percentages of women.

Figure 4.: Women's homelessness under different definitions

Figure HC3.1.2. Women typically account for a smaller share of people considered homelessness in national statistics, driven in part by how homelessness is defined and counted.

Share of women as a percentage of people experiencing homelessness, by ETHOS Light definition, point-in-time vs. flow data, 2023 or latest year

Source: OECD
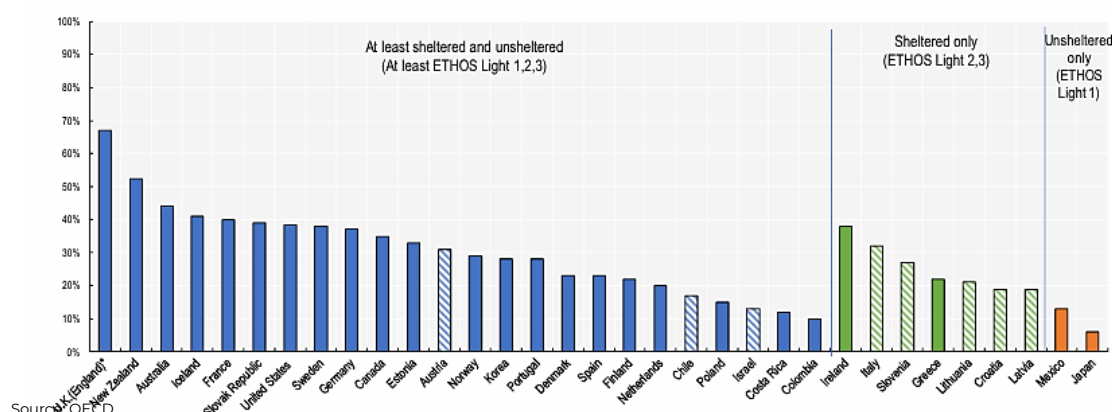
The OECD data further highlight major differences between countries in who is counted as homeless. Individual countries' data is assessed based on whether it counts children or those living in accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees, victims of domestic violence, as 'homeless' in statistics:

Table 2. Inclusion of sub-groups in national homelessness statistics

National counts include	
Children (<18)	Austria, Belgium (Brussels), Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, United Kingdom
Asylum seekers	Belgium (Brussels),France, Portugal, Spain
Temporary accommodation for refugees	Belgium (Brussels), France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom
Temporary accommodation for victims of domestic violence	Austria, Belgium (Brussels), Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

Source: OECD

Trends over time

The collected OECD data also provide an overview of homelessness trends in Europe over several time periods (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024). From 2017 to 2020, homelessness decreased in countries like Austria, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, and Slovenia, while the Netherlands saw a slight increase, and the United Kingdom experienced a significant rise. Between 2020 and 2022, homelessness remained mostly stable or showed a slight decline, largely due to eviction bans put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, from 2022 onwards, homelessness has increased in the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands. It is likely that rising housing and living costs, combined with inadequate policies to prevent and address homelessness, contributed to the significant rise in some countries. Finland continues to see a large and sustained decrease, attributed to its successful implementation of the Housing First approach (OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 2024).

Figure 5.Homelessness trends in Europe

Figure HC3.1.3. Homelessness is increasing in some countries, while decreasing in others.

Index of people experiencing homelessness as a share of the total population, 2017 to 2023 (or latest available year), indexed to 2017.
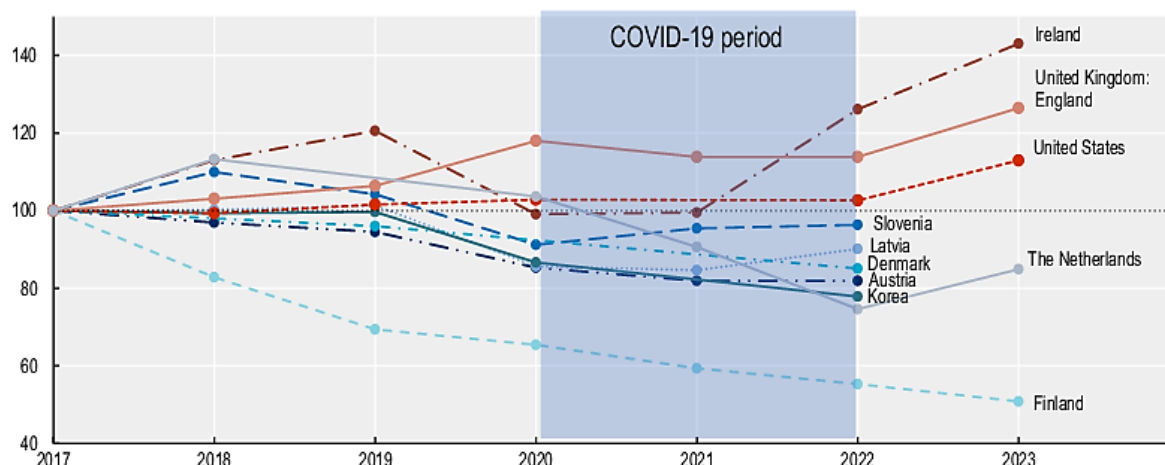
Source: OECD

As noted in the FEANTSA and FAP data, also, in some places the growth in homelessness can be attributed to improved data collection methods. Further research should examine more closely for which population groups these increases are more prevalent, e.g. women, migrants, etc., to better understand causal mechanisms.

1.3.3 2021 Population and Housing Census

The 2011 and 2021 Population and Housing Censuses have included data on homelessness. Both provide data on "*occupants living in another housing unit and the homeless*". The Census is normally done every ten years, counting the entire population and the housing stock, either based on a registry or traditional count system. This provides a snapshot of the population at a given time. Data on persons include the demographic structure (the population broken down by gender and age groups), educational and employment characteristics, and migration characteristics of the population. Additionally, and essential for housing exclusion data, there is data on dwelling types and housing arrangements.

The Census is not a dedicated data stream for homelessness statistics and is likely to be less accurate than the above discussed FEANTSA and FAP and OECD numbers, which are based on the national homelessness statistics each country publishes officially. The OECD and FEANTSA and FAP numbers are often collected via dedicated streams for data collection on homelessness, not via a population-wide survey/census, though individual countries differ greatly in this. The 2011 Census was the first to oblige Member States to collect data on homelessness (Batista et al., 2012). While the 2011 Census was unable to provide a reliable estimate of the rate of homelessness across Europe, in some countries it did produce reliable homelessness statistics for the first time (Batista et al., 2012).

The 2021 Census includes data from a larger number of countries. It defines homelessness as follows: "*The homeless (persons who are not usual residents in any living quarter category) can be persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters (primary homelessness) or persons moving frequently between temporary accommodation (secondary homelessness)*" (*CensusHub*, 2024). In the accessible data, homelessness is grouped together with individuals living in 'another housing unit'. '"*Other housing units" are huts, cabins, shacks, shanties, caravans, houseboats, barns, mills, caves or any other shelter used for human habitation at the time of the census, irrespective if it was designed for human habitation*' (*CensusHub*, 2024).

Figure 6. Data from the 2021 population and housing census

Housing arrangements ▶ Geographical area ▼	Total	Occupants living in an other housing unit and the homeless
Belgium	11.554.767	1.493
Bulgaria	6.519.789	3.904
Czechia	10.524.167	232.204
Estonia	1.331.824	2.753
Ireland	5.145.710 i	12.004 i
Greece	10.482.487	44.148
Spain	47.400.798	7.200
Croatia	3.871.833	4.294
Italy	59.030.133	185.531
Cyprus	923.382	2.232
Latvia	1.893.223	19.230
Lithuania	2.810.761	1.380
Luxembourg	643.941	1.448
Hungary	9.610.393	5.438
Malta	519.564	6
Netherlands	17.475.414	147.532
Austria	8.969.068	13.960
Portugal	10.343.066	13.084
Slovenia	2.108.977	11.524
Slovakia	5.449.270	148.854
Finland	5.533.793	65.088
Sweden	10.452.325	0

: - not available; "-" - not applicable; c - confidential; i - numerical value with info; u - low reliability; r - revised numerical value

Source: Census Hub 2021

Accuracy of Census data

We consulted the relevant national statistical offices to understand better the individual Member States' context, including data collection methods and reliability. We asked the following:

Table 3. Questions for national statistics offices

Data Collection	How did you gather data on homelessness specifically for the 2021 Census? Was it via secondary data sources or direct data collection?
Definitions	What definitions do you use for homelessness? Do you use the ETHOS categories (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) in your work? If so, how do you apply them? Do you differentiate between primary and secondary homelessness?
Data Sources	Where does your data come from (e.g. government records, NGOs)?
Frequency and Scope	How often do you collect this data, and how broad is your coverage?
Challenges	Are there any challenges you face in collecting or analysing this data?
Documentation	Is there any documentation we can read regarding the homeless data collection?
Accuracy	How accurate would you say the number is? Is it likely to be an over- or under-estimate?
Other housing unit	The Census includes 'other housing unit' along with 'homeless' as a category. Is this likely to influence the numbers? (it is not possible to separate)

Based on the answers received, we conclude that the overall accuracy of the Census Hub homelessness data for a cross-Europe comparison is highly questionable. The key reason is that in many countries it is not possible to further differentiate between the categories of 'other housing unit' and 'homeless', e.g.:

'The number 2753 corresponds to people living in other housing units (huts, cabins, shacks, shanties, caravans, houseboats, barns, mills, caves, or any other shelter used for human habitation at the time of the census, irrespective if it was designed for human habitation). There aren't any connections between the homeless people and the people living in other housing units.' (Estonia)

'The Census class 'Occupants living in another housing unit and the homeless' (65,088) contains people living in free time residences, in second homes or institutional living quarters etc. which they haven't announced to the register. In addition to this the number contains also 4,000 homeless people.' (Finland)

'First of all, it is not the intention of the census to estimate or count the number of homeless people specifically. Secondly, the number is part of a

residual category that includes all people not living in a conventional dwelling or collective living quarter. The number does not distinguish between homeless people and people living in nonconventional dwellings, but not being/experiencing homeless(ness). In other words, it is not clear what part of the residential category of 152.000 is actually homeless.' (Netherlands)

In contrast, in Luxembourg, for example, the Census included *only* homeless individuals within this category. However, in Belgium, this category does not actually include homeless people at all, due to the way the country's register-based census is conducted:

> *'The 1,493 listed in the Census Hub concern only 'occupants living in an other housing unit'. For Belgium, the category 'occupants living in an other housing unit and the homeless' does not include homeless people. [as noted above] homeless people who have a reference address in the National Register of Natural Persons (NRNP) are – wrongfully – included in the category 'occupants living in a conventional dwelling'. We do not have the additional information from the NRNP needed to distinguish them. Homeless people who do not have a reference address are not present in the Belgian census'.* (Belgium)

Another reason challenging cross-national comparison is differing definitions of homelessness (despite a definition being provided in the Census), or differing usage of population registers in solely register-based census proceedings:

> *'"Homeless Persons" in other situations like temporary accommodation, accommodation for the homeless or for immigrants, in medical institutions without a home and other type of situations are not classified as homeless/roofless in census'.* (Portugal)
>
> *'To determine the population, we rely on the National Register of Natural Persons (NRNP). [...] Registration in the NRNP is done on the basis of the main residence. The homeless – just like people living on a ship or itinerant caravan dwellers – do reside in Belgium, but have no main*

residence. By law, they are registered in the population register with a reference address. This is a legal fiction to administratively anchor people who do not have a main residence so that they can be reached by official bodies and continue to claim their rights (e.g. benefits). [...] This means that we cannot distinguish homeless people registered in the NRNP as a separate group. They are – wrongfully – treated as residents of conventional dwellings.' (Belgium)

A few countries, e.g. Latvia, Portugal, and Slovenia, provide additional information on homelessness within their metadata, most often in ETHOS categories 1-3, which made it possible to arrive at a more accurate number for these countries (see Figure 7 below). In some cases, countries specify which subgroup of homelessness they measure. In general, these numbers are substantially lower, except for Malta, where further clarification revealed a higher number of homeless persons.

Given these large differences, currently we cannot use the census data to say anything very solid about the prevalence of homelessness comparatively across Europe (see also Batista et al., 2012, for similar conclusions on the 2011 Housing and Population Census). Within the Census Hub, it is possible to further analyse data given based on gender, age, current activity status, size of locality, place of birth, country of citizenship, year of arrival in country, and residence in the year before. While these data points would be exceptionally valuable for assessments of homeless persons' demographics, they relate to the entire group of '*Occupants living in another housing unit and the homeless*', thus making it inaccurate for gauging actual data specifically on homelessness.

Figure 7. Census 2021 data, with additional details

Country	Census type	Total population	Occupants living in an other housing unit and the homeless	% of total population	Accuracy	Number specifically homeless, where indicated	Category, where known
Austria	Register-based	8969068	13960	0.156%	Underestimate		
Belgium	Register-based	11554767	1493	0.013%	Underestimate		
Bulgaria	Combined	6519789	3904	0.060%		82	Ethos Light 2/3
Croatia		3871833	4294	0.111%			
Cyprus	Combined	923382	2232	0.242%		0	Ethos Light 1
Czechia	Combined	10524167	232204	2.206%	Overestimate	3726	Primary and secondary total
Denmark							
Estonia	Mostly register-based	1331824	2753	0.207%	Overestimate		
Finland	Register-based	5533793	65088	1.176%	Overestimate	4000	Primary and secondary total
France							
Germany							
Greece		10482487	44148	0.421%			
Hungary		9610393	5438	0.057%			
Ireland	Traditional	5145710	12004	0.233%	Relatively accurate	10321	Primary and secondary total
Italy	Register-based	59030133	185531	0.314%			
Latvia	Register-based	1893223	19230	1.016%	Overestimate	1800	Ethos Light 1
Lithuania		2810761	1380	0.049%			
Luxembourg	Combined	643941	1448	0.225%	Underestimate		
Malta	Combined	519564	6	0.001%	Underestimate	372	Primary and secondary total
Netherlands	Register-based	17475414	147532	0.844%	Overestimate		
Poland							
Portugal	Traditional	10343066	13084	0.127%	Relatively accurate	2127	Ethos Light 1
Romania							
Slovakia	Combined	5449270	148854	2.732%	Overestimate	71076	Primary and secondary total
Slovenia	Register-based	2108977	11524	0.546%	Overestimate	3060	Primary and secondary total
Spain		47400798	7200	0.015%			
Sweden		10452325	0	0.000%	Underestimate		

1.3.4 EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)

EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) (*Database - Income and Living Conditions - Eurostat*, n.d.) collects cross-sectional and longitudinal data across Europe on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions. This is done via national probability surveys with household and individual data collection. Most data are collected annually, though some modules are collected every 3-6 years, or on an ad-hoc basis for specific policy needs. EU-SILC annually covers several housing indicators, such as housing cost burden, arrears, and overcrowding.

EU-SILC has also implemented specialised modules to capture past experiences of housing difficulties. The housing difficulties modules are designed to gather comprehensive data on various aspects of housing instability. The

prevalence of experience of homelessness amongst the general population is useful to know, particularly as homelessness is often erroneously conceived to be a marginal issue that does not concern 'ordinary' people. By focusing on individuals' historical experiences with housing difficulties, EU-SILC adds to the body of knowledge on homelessness. However, it is crucial to note that as these are self-reported data, numbers are likely to be influenced by public ideas of what counts as homelessness, which might vary substantially between countries.

While this is a very valuable source of information on retrospective experiences of homelessness, as it is a conventional household survey of people living in private households, it is unlikely to capture things like chronic homelessness, i.e. anyone currently unsheltered would be excluded. Sampling frames are drawn from the permanent address registers of the population in each country, thus persons living in collective households, in institutions or not having a registered address are excluded. Non-private households are not included by definition: "*individuals living in collective households or in institutions are excluded from the target population'*"(Eurostat, 2023, p. 60). Those currently living with family or friends (e.g. co-residents out of education with no parent or partner in the household) could be identified, but likely not too precisely. A person could be experiencing housing difficulties at the time of the interview if they were forced to move back to their family home or stay with friends as they cannot afford other accommodation.

The module asks questions about different experiences of past homelessness, roughly equating to ETHOS Light 1, ETHOS Light 2-3, ETHOS Light 5, and ETHOS Light 6.

2018 Module

The 2018 ad-hoc module was implemented in 21 countries (Eurostat, 2018). These data reveal that 4% of the population has experienced homelessness at some point in their lives (Eurostat, 2018). Respondents in Hungary were the least likely to have experienced past housing difficulties, and respondents in Denmark were the most likely. Overall, a small percentage (0.2%) of individuals reported instances of rough sleeping or sleeping in public spaces. For most respondents,

the duration of their most recent experience with housing difficulties was less than 12 months.

The primary reason cited for these difficulties was relationship or family problems (32.5%), followed by financial issues and insufficient income (20.2%). In terms of exiting these difficulties, the most frequent answer was 'other' (36%), while the second most common response involved establishing an existing, new, or renewed relationship with family or a partner (22%). Out of those who have ever experienced housing difficulties, 8% were still in this situation – encompassing 0.32% of the total population.

2023 Module

The module and its methodology were revised and expanded for the 2023 iteration, which included samples from all EU member states. This updated module is now a mandatory component of the ad-hoc modules, to be conducted every six years across Member States. EU-SILC data are provided for the overall population (above the age of 16) and further broken down by those at risk of poverty or social exclusion ('AROPE'). AROPE is a sum of individuals in a country who are either at risk of poverty (defined as earning less than 60% of the median), are severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with very low work intensity (Eurostat, 2023). The 2023 housing difficulties module offers extensive data on past experiences of homelessness across all EU Member States (For additional analysis, see also *Housing & Renting Difficulties*, 2024).

Overall past experiences of homelessness

The 2023 housing difficulties-module asked respondents: *'Have you been in a situation where you did not have your own home and were forced to live with, for instance, family or friends or had to sleep outside?'* (For precise phrasing by country, see: www.gesis.org/en/missy/materials/EU-SILC/documents/questionnaires.

There was some variation in countries in exactly how the question was phrased and how much initial detail was given:

o   *'Have you ever been in a situation where you did not have a permanent home for at least two consecutive weeks and had to stay at that time with relatives or friends, in emergency accommodation or sleep outside, for*

example?' (Finland)

o *'Have you ever experienced involuntary or enforced housing difficulties?' (Germany)*

o *'Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't have a place of your own to live?' (Hungary)*

o *'Have you ever experienced housing difficulties in your life, i.e. situations in which you did not have your own or rented accommodation to stay in and were forced to find other temporary or emergency accommodation?' (Italy)*

o *'Have you ever been in a situation where you did not have your own place to live and were forced to live outside your home/apartment, e.g. with friends, in an institution such as a night shelter, a shelter for the homeless, in a trailer, a gazebo, in a stairwell, at a station, etc.?' (Poland)*

o *'Have you ever experienced, involuntarily, housing difficulties?' (Romania)*

Across the European Union, 4.9% of the sampled population reports to have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. This number, based on nationally representative samples, is substantially higher than any PIT estimates, which is to be expected (Taylor et al., 2019; Toro et al., 2007). Taylor et al. (2019), using data from select European countries, found a lifetime homelessness prevalence of 4.96%.

Figure 8. Percentage of population with lifetime experience of homelessness

Source: Eurostat
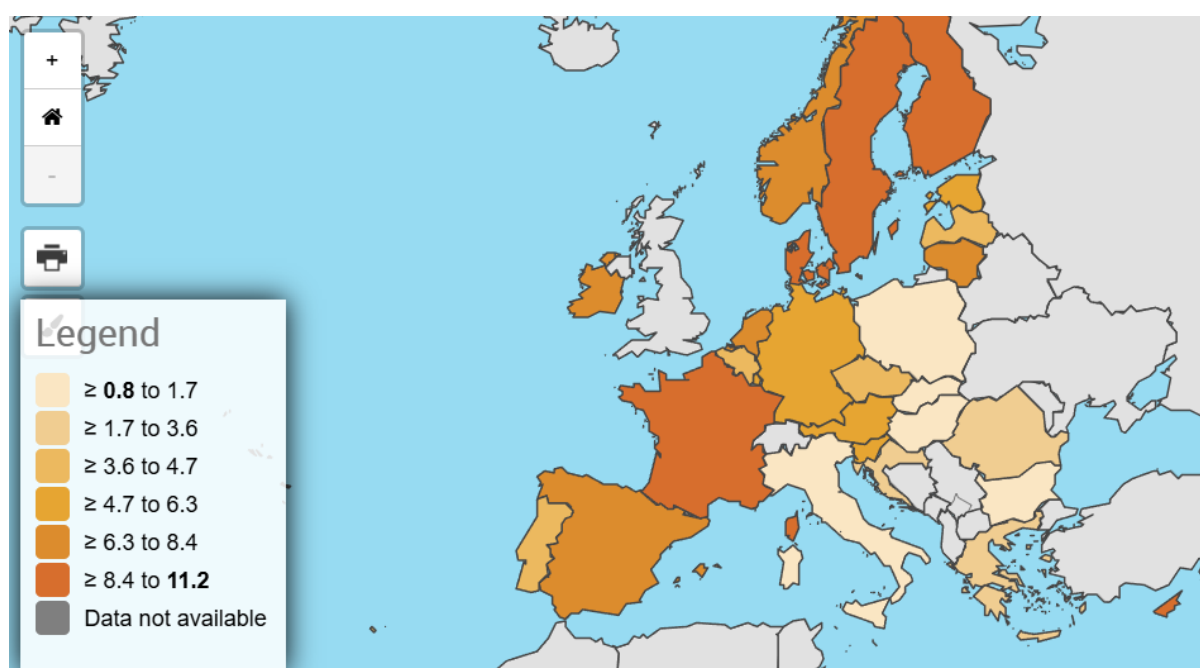
The highest rate of past experience of homelessness is in Cyprus (11.2%) and the lowest in Hungary (0.8% - identical to 2018 module). This may be because in some countries, successfully *exiting* homelessness is more likely, thus previously homeless individuals have a chance to be included within the dataset. This could allude to international differences between breakdowns regarding chronicity in homelessness, e.g. transitional, episodic, and chronic homelessness (Robben & Hermans, 2024), the last of which EU-SILC is unlikely to capture. There was only a marginal difference in lifetime experience of homelessness by gender: for women the number is 4.8%, versus 4.9% for men. Contrarily, most other official statistics show smaller shares of women (Coego et al., 2004).

Figure 9. Percentage of the total population having experienced homelessness in their lifetime, by gender

Source: Eurostat
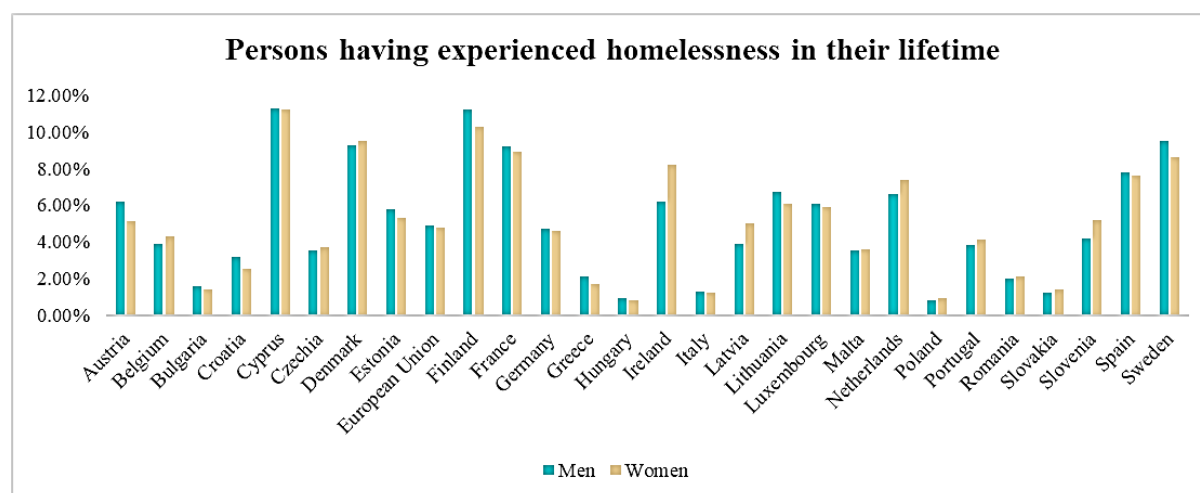
Differences by housing regimes

Housing-welfare regime typology has been utilized throughout this report to indicate differences between groups of countries (see Chapter 1). The graph below shows past experience of homelessness in European countries, grouped together by housing regime type. We see the lowest levels of past homelessness in the Central-and-Eastern European-countries and some Southern-European countries. The conservative-corporatist and social-democratic unitary rental market countries, as well as the North-Western European homeownership countries tend to have higher values, contrary to what prior research has hypothesized (Benjaminsen & Andrade, 2015; Stephens & Fitzpatrick, 2007). Regardless, there is no clear trend, suggesting that homelessness as a phenomenon is more complex than what the housing-welfare regime typology can clearly explain.

Figure 10. Percentage of the total population having experienced homelessness in their lifetime, by housing-welfare regime
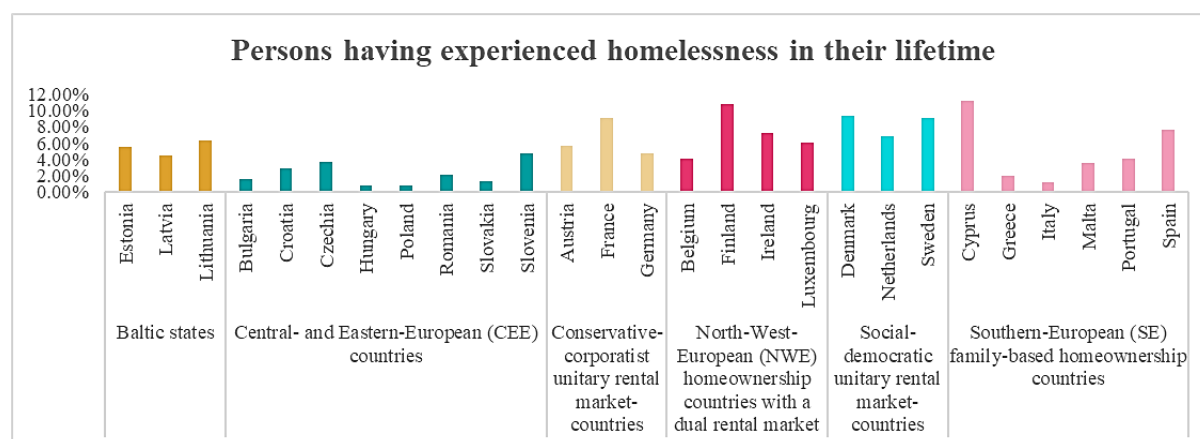
As homelessness is a multi-faceted and heterogeneous experience, it is possible that further breakdowns into aggregate groups (e.g. migration status, poverty risk, etc.,) could show trends better explained by housing-welfare regime typology, which future research could explore.

Importantly, what is also likely to influence the overall homelessness numbers are *cultural interpretations* of homelessness and what is an 'acceptable' form of housing, associated with relative wealth and cultural norms. This is especially true

with regards to issues like overcrowding, or multiple generations sharing a home. As discussed in Chapter 2, overcrowding is a notable characteristic of Southern- and Eastern-European housing-welfare regimes, closely linked to intergenerational co-residence (Norris & Domanski, 2009; Stephens et al., 2015). Indeed, when looking at measures of housing precarity (see Chapter 3), there is an inverse correlation (r=-0.6) between overcrowding rates in a country (EU-SILC 2023 data) and past experience of homelessness. Past rates of homelessness are lower as rates of overcrowding are higher.

Also, in these regions there is more of a tendency to see homelessness as merely people living rough and in emergency accommodation. However, even when looking at only rough sleeping numbers, we still do not see the 'expected' trends play out between different housing-welfare regimes, and literal homelessness, or rough sleeping is much less open to cultural interpretation.

Risk of poverty or social exclusion

As noted previously, EU-SILC further breaks down the data for those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and those not at current risk. We see that the lifetime experience of homelessness is much higher in the EU among people currently classified as AROPE: 8.5% among those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and 3.9% among those not at risk. When only looking at those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, we see the highest rate in Denmark (18.4%) and the lowest in Poland (1.9%, though noted to be 'unreliable'). On the other hand, only looking at the population not at risk of poverty or social exclusion Cyprus (10.5%) and Hungary (0.5%) have the highest and lowest rates, respectively.

Looking at overall EU data, those currently at risk of poverty and social exclusion are more than twice (2.18) as likely to experience homelessness (8.5%) as those who are not (3.9%).

## Figure 11. Past experience of homelessness by current AROPE status

Source: Eurostat

Past experience of homelessness and current risk of poverty
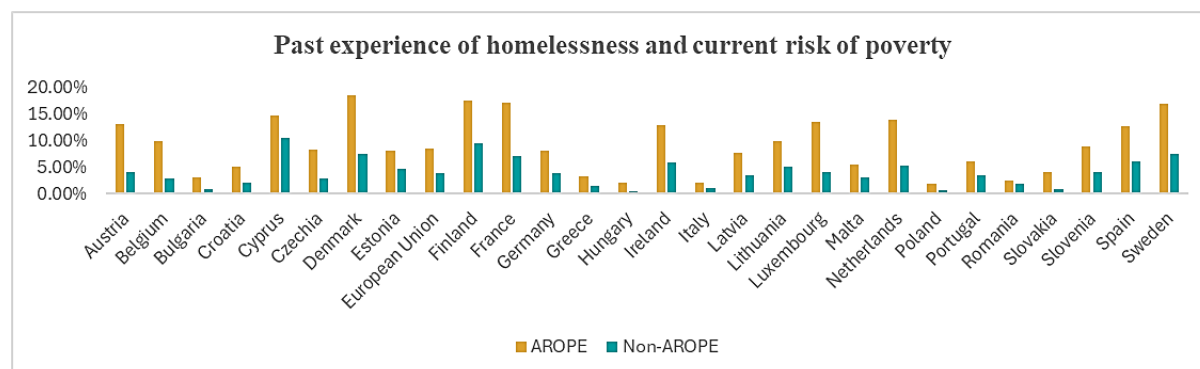
This relative difference is starkest in Slovakia and Hungary, where AROPE individuals are 5.13 and 4.2 times more likely to have experienced past housing difficulties than those not at risk of poverty and exclusion currently. The difference is smallest in Romania (1.32). These data do not fit regime theory expectations: within-regime differences in linking poverty and social exclusion to homelessness may be greater than between-regime differences, despite similar welfare state arrangements.

Figure 12. Past experience of homelessness by current AROPE status

Source: Eurostat

How much more likely are those at current risk of poverty or social exclusion to have experienced housing difficulties in the past?
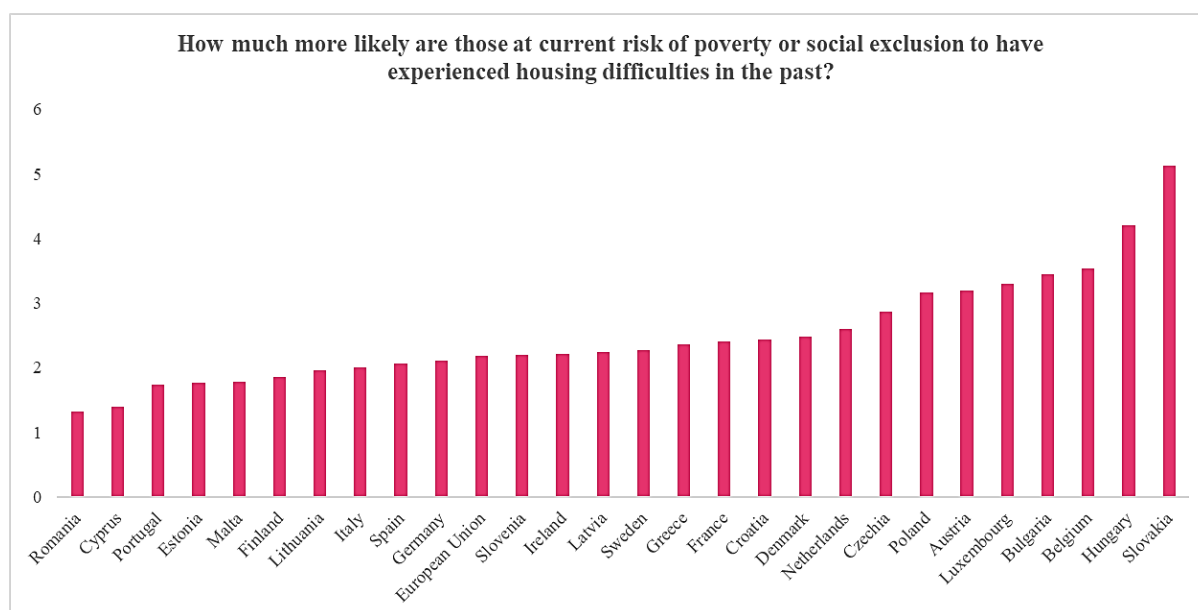
Interestingly, if we compare countries' overall poverty rates with their total rates of past homelessness, the results are rather unexpected and contrary to presupposed trends, that presume higher rates of homelessness among countries with higher poverty rates (Benjaminsen & Andrade, 2015; Stephens & Fitzpatrick, 2007). This lack of the expected association holds true even when comparing *only* past homelessness among those currently AROPE. However, we must emphasize that the dynamics at play are very complex: although poverty is undoubtedly related to homelessness, many other determinants as well as dynamics explain the lack of association seen below.

Figure 13.Total past experience of homelessness compared to country rates of poverty (2023)

Source: Eurostat

Country poverty rate compared to past rates of homelessness
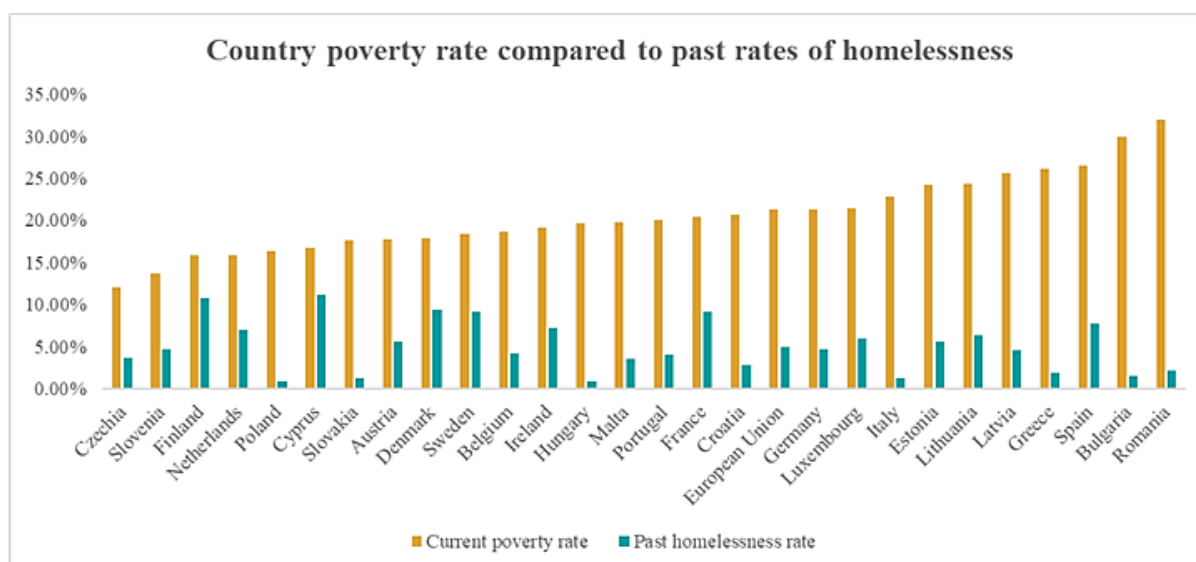
Types of homelessness

EU-SILC gathers data on what individuals did while facing housing difficulties: stayed with relatives or friends, stayed in emergency accommodation, stayed in a place not intended as a permanent home, or slept outside. Among individuals who have faced housing difficulties, 4.2% reported sleeping outside (ETHOS 1), 13% stayed in emergency accommodation (ETHOS 2-3), 6.6% stayed in a place not intended as a permanent home (ETHOS 5), and 76.2% stayed with relatives or

friends (ETHOS 6). The below pie charts show how the different temporary solutions compare between men and women (in the EU).
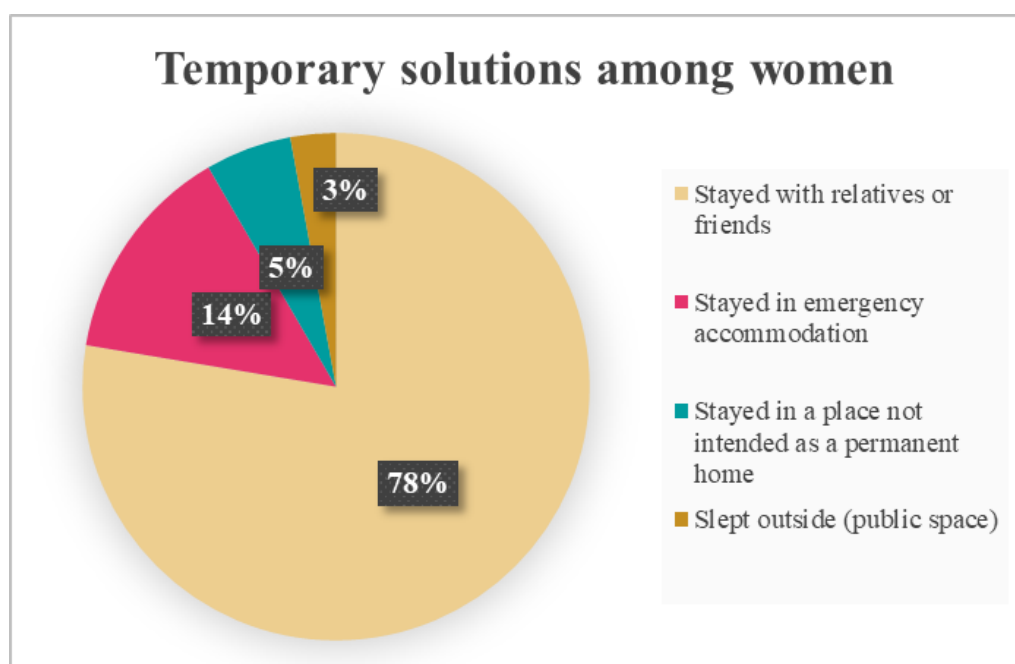
Figure 14.ETHOS Light categories among men

Source: Eurostat
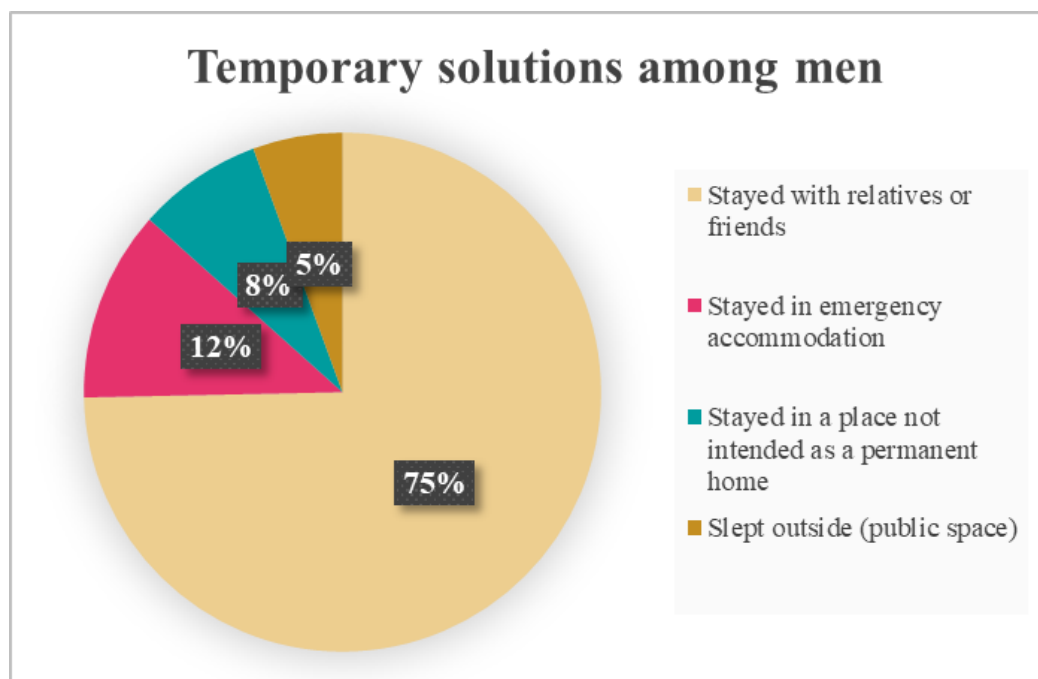
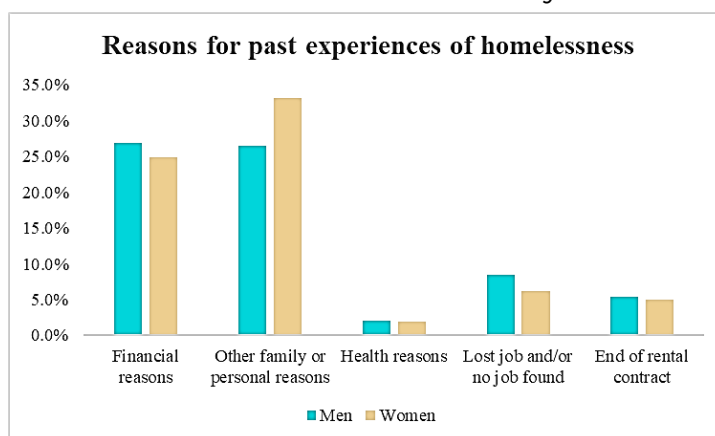### Figure 15. ETHOS Light categories among women

Source: Eurostat

Men and women experience homelessness at roughly similar scales (4.9% among men and 4.8% among women when looking at lifetime incidence). The breakdown of different solutions used is also relatively similar among both genders, though there are notable differences. These data suggest that women are roughly half as likely to experience rough sleeping (2.9%) than men (5.6%), though the difference, at least at the EU-level is not as stark as previously assumed. The highest rate of women rough sleeping was in France (5.1%), for men rough sleeping was most common in Portugal (12.3%).

Reasons for past experience of homelessness

In the EU, the most common reason for past experiences of homelessness is 'other family or personal issues', which represents 30% of responses. This is closely followed by financial hardship, accounting for 25.9% of cases. Among the given options, health-related issues were the least likely to cause homelessness.

Figure 16. Reasons for past experiences of homelessness, by gender
Source: Eurostat
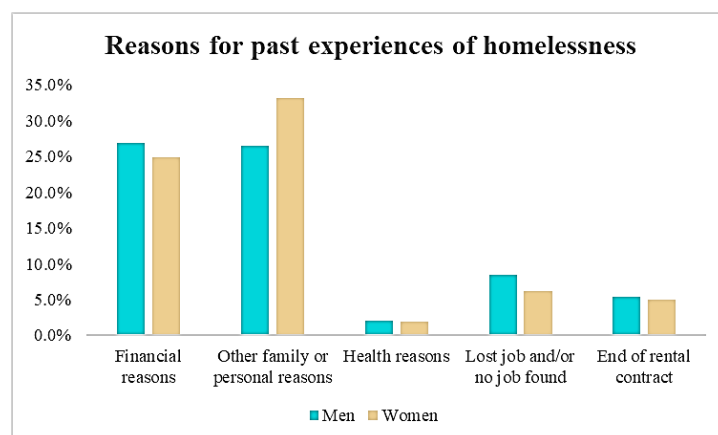
Overcoming homelessness

Reasons for overcoming homelessness include 'family reasons', 'health reasons', 'job found', 'moved into social or subsidised private housing', and 'other reason'. In the EU, 'other reason' was the most common (37.9%) and health reasons were again least common (1.1%). The fact that 'Other' reasons is the most common answer category clearly indicates the limitations of the given categories.

Figure 17. Reasons for overcoming past experiences of homelessness, by gender

Source: Eurostat
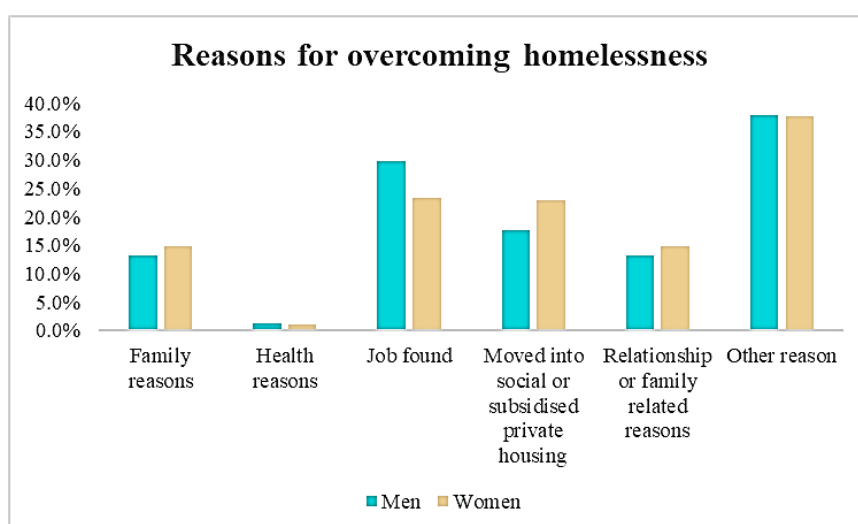
Past experience of homelessness and migration status

We can also gain some insight into the nationality or countries of origin of those with past experiences of homelessness from EU-SILC. Note, however, that EU-SILC designates numerous countries' data as 'unreliable' on this topic. Respondents are asked about their country of birth and current country of citizenship. These are both grouped into:

1. EU27 countries, except reporting country
2. Non-EU27 country, nor reporting country
3. Foreign country

Reporting country

When looking at country of birth, the highest rate of past homelessness across the EU is among those not from an EU27 country and not the reporting country (11.3%). The lowest rate is among native-born individuals (4.1%). When looking at individual countries' data, t native-born individuals are generally less likely to experience homelessness, with Cyprus being the one notable exception. Generally, those from non-EU27 countries and also not the reporting country were most likely to experience homelessness.

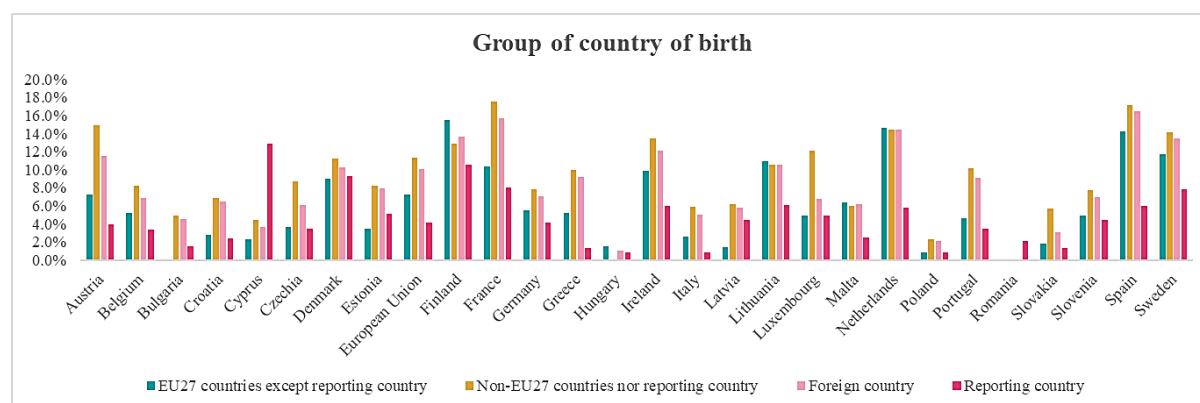**Figure 18. Past experience of homelessness by group of country of birth**

Source: Eurostat

Breaking the data down by gender and looking at reporting versus non-reporting country of birth, we see that for much of the EU, those born outside of the reporting country are generally more likely to experience lifetime homelessness than those born in the reporting country. We see this trend continue when broken down by gender, as well. However, though foreign-born men or foreign-born women are more likely to have experienced homelessness, we see more differences. In countries such as Bulgaria, and Sweden, for example, foreign-born men are much more likely to experience homelessness than any other group. Interestingly foreign-born women are most likely to have experienced homelessness in Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia.

Figure 19.Past experience of homelessness by group of country of birth, and gender

Past experience of homelessness by country of birth, and sex
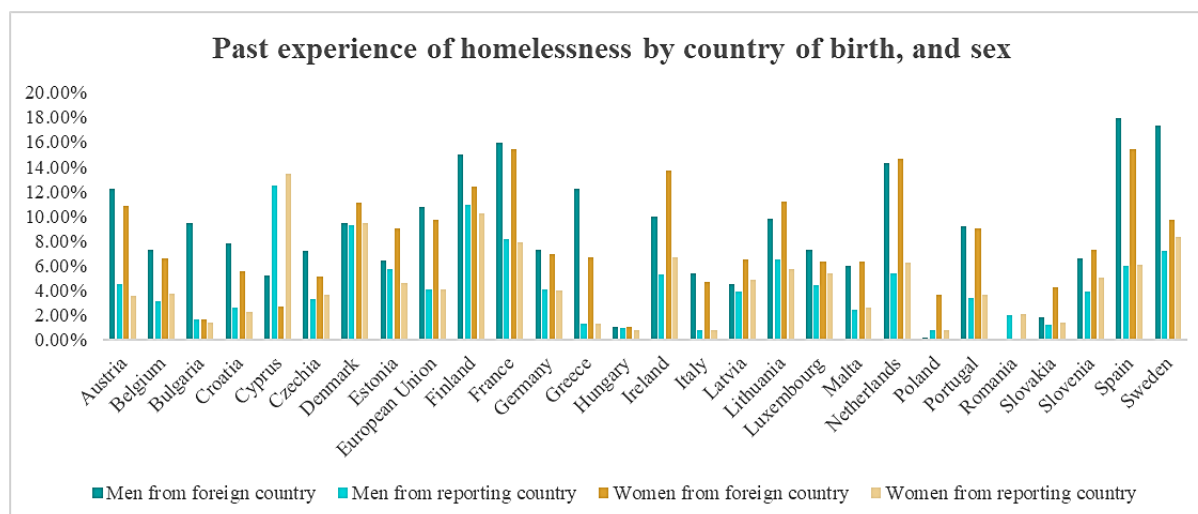
Source: Eurostat

Respondents are also asked about their current country of citizenship. The highest rate of past homelessness for the EU is among those with citizenship from a non-EU27 country and not the reporting country (11.8%). The lowest is among those with local country citizenship (4.4%). We see similar trends as with country of birth. Homelessness among those with citizenship of the reporting country tend to have the lowest homelessness rates, with Cyprus, again, as the exception. It is worth noting that the data do not specify *where* past homelessness occurred, whether it was inside or outside of the reporting country.

Figure 20.Past experience of homelessness by group of current country of citizenship

Source: Eurostat
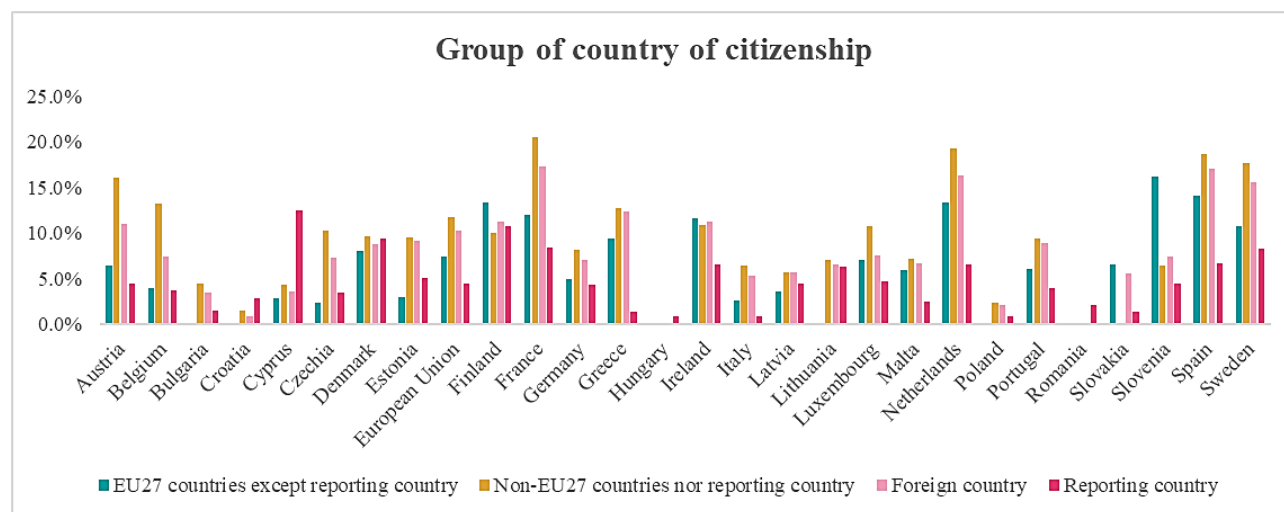
Currently experiencing homelessness

Currently, 6.3% of those who answered that they had a past experience of homelessness, are *still* homeless, in other words, their housing difficulties have not been resolved at the time of data collection. Because of the way sampling is done for EU-SILC, those currently homelessness belong most likely in ETHOS Light category 6, sofa surfers.

This number equates to 0.31% of the total population and represents over one million people in EU Member States. It is nearly identical to the percentage from the 2018 module (0.32%). The highest rate of current homelessness compared to the overall population, is in Spain (1.5%). The lowest is in Austria (0.02%). Cyprus reports that none of those with experience of past homelessness are still homeless.

Figure 21. Percentage *still* experiencing homelessness (of those with lifetime experience)

Source: Eurostat
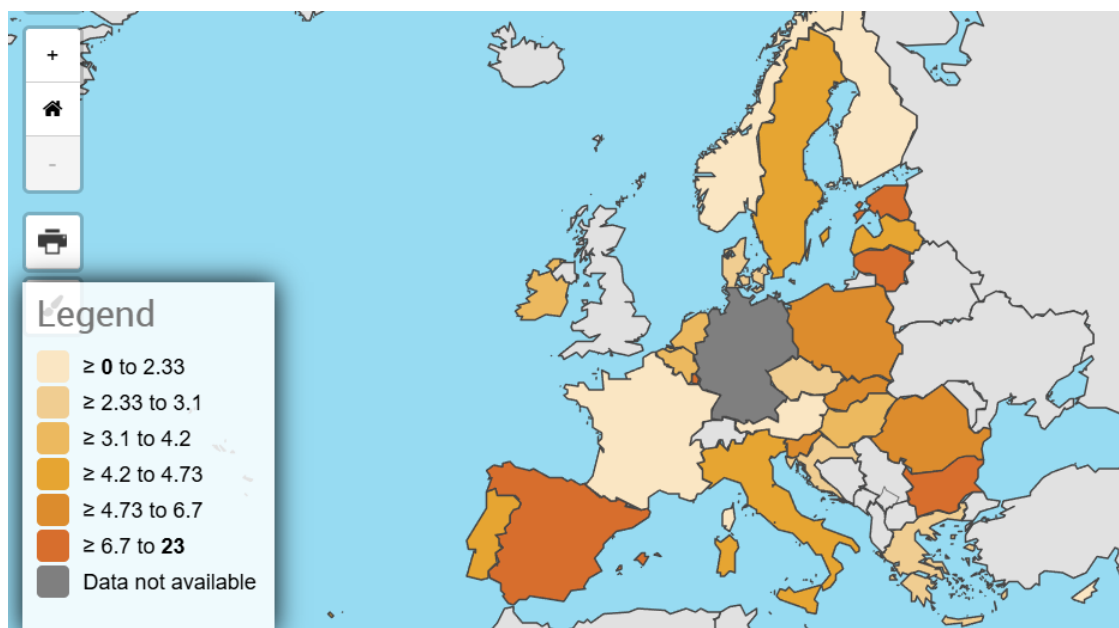
We see a more substantial difference by gender when looking at current versus lifetime experience of homelessness. The data show that 7.2% of men and 5.5% of women of those with lifetime experience, are still experiencing homelessness at the time of data collection. The discrepancy may suggest that available methods for capturing the true scale of *current* homelessness among women are still inadequate.

Here we also see much starker differences between the AROPE-respondents versus the general population. Overall, for the overall EU population, those at risk of poverty and social exclusion are 3.71 times more likely to currently be homeless than those not at risk.

The countries with the largest difference in homelessness between the two groups are Bulgaria, Czechia and Luxembourg. The following countries reported that no one who is not AROPE is currently experiencing homelessness: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus and Ireland.

Figure 22.Persons having experienced lifetime homelessness versus those still experiencing it, by country

Source: Eurostat
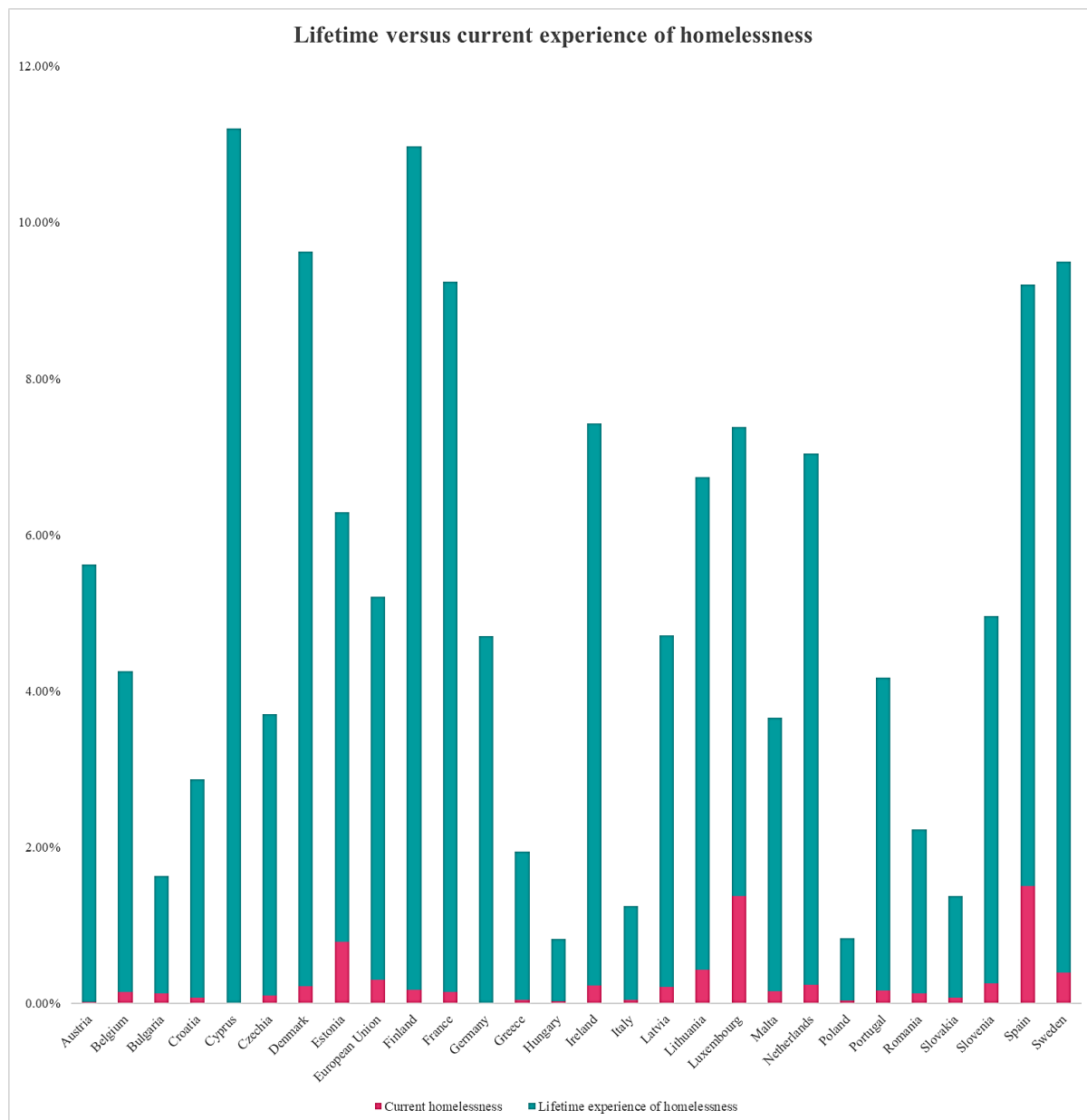
Overall comparison of different data sources

We have compared four different data sources on European homelessness. As the graph below details, the data sources suggest vastly different scales of homelessness for some countries.

Figure 23. Percent of total population currently experiencing homelessness, by data source

Comparison of different data sources on homelessness
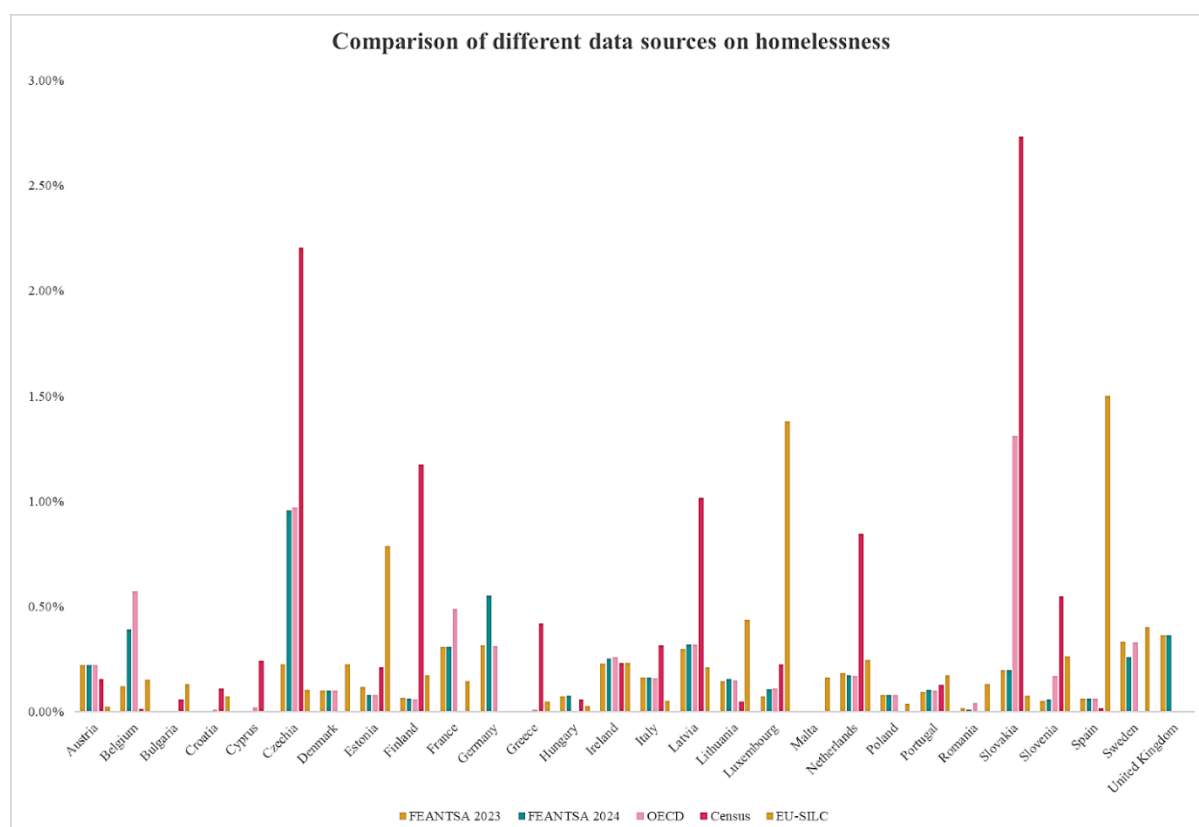
There are two substantial methodological problems with combining these data sources. First, the above are total numbers, *not* disaggregated in any way by ETHOS Light categories. Second, it is key to note that the above graph includes both PIT and flow data, intermixed, this is a key flaw as these are fundamentally incomparable absolute numbers. This hinders comparison and explains at least some differences in numbers. Some lack of overlap thus is not necessarily indicative of unreliability. In addition, there are also inherent flaws in PIT counts that mean that while they might be used as trend data, they can never actually give a fully accurate picture of homelessness.

The table below shows a correlation matrix for these different data sources.

Table 4. Correlations between homelessness indicators at country-level

	FEANTSA 2023	FEANTSA 2024	OECD	Census
FEANTSA 2024	0.611			
OECD	0.427	0.616		
Census	0.232	0.479	0.802	
EU-SILC	-0.253	-0.233	-0.207	-0.223

Based on the above, we could conclude that the OECD and Census measures align quite well (r=0.8), as do FEANTSA 2023 and 2024 (r=0.6) (despite the changes over time), and OECD and FEANTSA 2024 (r=0.6). In this case, they prove that the EU-SILC question measures a different concept, as will be discussed below.

However, because the number of data points (countries) is quite small, the correlations are easily skewed by outliers. Table 4 includes all data points, including some extreme outliers. When these are removed from the dataset, we get the following correlation matrix.

Table 5. Correlations between homelessness indicators at the country-level, with strong outliers removed

	FEANTSA 2023	FEANTSA 2024	OECD	Census
FEANTSA 2024	0.821			
OECD	0.667	0.819		
Census	0.064	-0.058	-0.098	
EU-SILC	-0.253	-0.233	-0.135	-0.164

In table 4, the two FEANTSA measures correlate less strongly that expected because Czechia changed a lot between 2023 and 2024, at least in relative terms. When removed, Table 5 shows a much more significant correlation (r=8.2). Inversely, the correlation between OECD and Census measures is highly inflated by outliers in Table 4, again Czechia and Slovakia. Removing them reduces the correlations to near-zero.

Overall, FEANTSA and FAP and OECD data tend to align more closely (when excluding strong outliers), as these are based on official statistics reported by countries. Census and EU-SILC data tend to differ more substantially, both from each other and from the former two data sources. Some differences are to be expected due to the different nature of data collection utilized and the different

ETHOS Light categories covered (see Figure 1, previously). However, large difference (e.g., see Finland, Luxembourg, Romania) are likely to suggest deeper inaccuracies in at least some of the data collection methods in that country.

As detailed earlier, the 2021 Population and Housing Census has proven an unreliable estimate of current homelessness in a number of Member States, especially when looking only at the data that appears on the Census Hub, without clarifying further with the appropriate statistical bodies. The inclusion of 'other housing units' alongside homelessness muddles the category in nearly all countries, giving an inflated estimate of homelessness in multiple countries. Thus, we can likely disregard the extreme outliers in this data set, e.g., Czechia, Slovakia, Finland.

Regarding the EU-SILC data, further analysis is needed to better explain the unexpected differences among Member States. As this data is collected at individual level from household samples, it is difficult to compare accurately with other data sources that include people living in institutions or not having a permanent registered address.

When comparing EU-SILC current homelessness data to the other sources, e.g., FEANTSA and FAP, we need to disaggregate by ETHOS Light categories to make meaningful sense of the differences. 'Current' homelessness in EU-SILC only captures ETHOS Light 6, sofa surfing. EU-SILC numbers are substantially higher than the other data sets for a country, e.g., Luxembourg, Estonia, Spain, but these countries do not measure ETHOS Light 6 in other sources. In other words, the two data sets are capturing different subgroups of homelessness. ETHOS Light category 6 is collected in national data sources (e.g. see FEANTSA and FAP data and OECD-data) in Belgium Czechia, Denmark, Finland and Germany, only. When comparing only this category of sofa surfing, we see that EU-SILC estimates are higher in Denmark (0.23% versus 0.10%) and Finland (0.17% versus 0.06%) than the nationally disseminated numbers, unsurprisingly.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on bringing together the currently available sources on homelessness in Europe. We have summarized and analysed data published

by national governments (see FEANTSA and FAP and OECD), data gathered via the 2021 Population and Housing Census, and data on retrospective experiences of homelessness from the EU-SILC Housing Difficulties module. We further analysed the methods and results of these sources and examined how comparable they are at the disaggregated ETHOS Light level. We conclude that while European homelessness data have evolved substantially in recent years, there is nonetheless a strong need for further improvements in data collection, standardisation, and dissemination to ensure that comparisons appropriately consider contexts of data, not just output numbers.

When comparing differences between European countries, we see trends which do not strongly align with previous theories on where homelessness is more or less prevalent; based on poverty rates and/or welfare state dynamics. There are two directions of explanations for this. First, as discussed, there are substantial flaws in the data itself (differences in definitions, data collection and data dissemination) hindering accurate comparability between countries. Second, it may be that the previously theorised trends are no longer accurate. Further research needs to examine this possibility.

1.5 Recommendations

Regardless of the data sources we examine, it is evident that homelessness and housing exclusion remain growing challenges across Europe. Concurrently, the accuracy of data collection methods for homelessness have significantly improved in recent years, though there remains scope for improvement.

To increase the accuracy of data and scope for trans-national comparability, we recommend the following:

- All Member States and data collection entities move towards using the ETHOS and ETHOS Light typology for defining homelessness in a standardised fashion.

- Regarding methodology, the homelessness count methodology developed by KU Leuven (Belgium) has proven robust, cost-effective, and transferrable to different policy contexts. We recommend expanding this to further European cities.

- Disseminate homelessness numbers in the Population and Housing Census as its own separate category, instead of grouping with 'other housing'. Many of the countries have this data available more accurately disaggregated. If it is grouped with 'other housing', it would be beneficial to define the category as 'other dwellings *not* intended for human habitation', as this would make it more aligned with actual homelessness. The category currently utilized includes too many very different forms of housing, including vacation homes.

- EUROSTAT should provide more and better guidance, technical assistance, and validation processes on homelessness statistics from the Census in the future. If homeless people are included in the Census, more effort is needed to make sure it happens properly.

- The EU-SILC Housing Difficulties module should be continued. The variables should be refined and improved based on experience to better overcome the arising cultural biases. In addition, questions should be added to gauge when and for how long past housing difficulties persisted.

- There is a great need for improved data collection on women's homelessness, by using a gendered lens to better understand the scale of women's homelessness, including rough sleeping.

- Different methods and approaches of collecting data on homelessness are important to better understand the scale and profile of the issue. In countries where all four listed data sources align relatively closely, e.g. Ireland, it is perhaps more likely that we are closer to the truth, though disaggregation by ETHOS Light categories complicates comparisons.

- Migration is increasingly changing trends and profiles of homelessness across Europe. Increased attention must be given to accurately enumerating homelessness among asylum seekers, refugees, mobile EU citizens, and undocumented migrants.

- Work on improving data collection on homelessness in Europe should continue under the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH), building on the benchmarking that has been done by the OECD and on the Pilot Project that is ongoing.

These recommendations are crucial in continuing to highlight the most extreme end of housing precarity: homelessness.

References

Batista, I., Benjaminsen, L., Pleace, N., & Busch-Geertsema, V. (2012). Counting Homeless People in the 2011 Housing and Population Census.pdf. European Observatory on Homelessness.

Benjaminsen, L., & Andrade, S. B. (2015). Testing a Typology of Homelessness Across Welfare Regimes: Shelter Use in Denmark and the USA. Housing Studies, 30(6), 858–876. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2014.982517

Bretherton, J., & Mayock, P. (2021). Women's Homelessness: European Evidence Review. In Feantsa (Issue March). European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. https://www.feantsa.org/en/report/2021/04/01/womens-homelessness-european-evidence-review?bcParent=27

Busch-Geertsema, V. (2010). Defining and Measuring Homelessness. In Homelessness Research in Europe (pp. 19–40). https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/ch013303200488323787194.pdf

CensusHub. (2024). https://ec.europa.eu/CensusHub/loadMetadata

Coego, A., Gatta, A., Lionetti, F., LLoyd, A., Molard, S., Nordberg, A., Plouin, M., Prioetti, P., Spinnenwijn, F., Stamos, I., & Van Heerden, S. (2004). The different faces of homelessness: Exploring specific data and policy needs. European Commission.

Database—Income and living conditions—Eurostat. (n.d.). Retrieved January 8, 2025, from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/database?node_code=ilc_pwb

Eurostat. (2018). Material deprivation, well-being and housing difficulties.

Eurostat. (2023). Methodological Guidelines and Description of EU-SILC Target Variables. European Commission.

Fitzpatrick, S., Kemp, P., & Klinker, S. (2000). Single Homelessness: An overview of research in Britain.

Horvat, N. (2024, September). Launch of the 9th Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nxx0No9DE4E

Horvat, N., & Coupechoux, S. (2024). Ninth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe. FAP, FEANTSA.

Housing & renting difficulties: What is the EU's situation? (2024, October 11). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20241011-2

London Councils, Single Homeless Project, & Solace. (2023). London Women's Rough Sleeping Census. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/ls0f1zqg/london-2023-womens-rough-sleeping-census-report.pdf

Michelangeli, A., Proietti, P., Siragusa, A., & Stamos, I. (2024). Comparative Analysis on Homelessness' Monitoring in Europe for the 2030 Agenda. SSRN Electronic Journal. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4892589

Norris, M., & Domanski, H. (2009). Housing Conditions, States, Markets and Households: A Pan-European Analysis. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice, 11, 385–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/13876980903158027

OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. (2024). Population Experiencing Homelessness. OECD.

O'Sullivan, E., Pleace, N., & Busch, V. (2020). Distorting Tendencies in Understanding Homelessness in Europe. 14(3).

Pleace, N., & Hermans, K. (2020). Counting All Homelessness in Europe: The Case for Ending Separate Enumeration of 'Hidden Homelessness.' 14(3).

Reeve, K., Casey, R., & Goudie, R. (2006). Still being failed yet striving to survive.

Robben, L., & Hermans, K. (2024). Revisiting the threefold typology? An exploratory analysis of homelessness duration and recurrence in Belgium using administrative data. Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness, 0(0), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2024.2426288

Stephens, M., & Fitzpatrick, S. (2007). Welfare Regimes, Housing Systems and Homelessness: How are they linked? European Observatory on Homelessness. https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/ejh_vol1_thinkpiece1573072234 1054309703.pdf

Stephens, M., Lux, M., & Sunega, P. (2015). Post-Socialist Housing Systems in Europe: Housing Welfare Regimes by Default? Housing Studies, 30(8), 1210–1234. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1013090

Taylor, O., Loubiere, S., Tinland, A., Vargas-Moniz, M., Spinnewijn, F., Manning, R., Gaboardi, M., Wolf, J. R. L. M., Bokszczanin, A., Bernad, R., Kallmen, H., Toro, P., Ornelas, J., & Auquier, P. (2019). Lifetime, 5-year and past-year prevalence of homelessness in Europe: A cross-national survey in eight European nations. BMJ Open, 9(11), e033237. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-033237

Toro, P. A., Tompsett, C. J., Lombardo, S., Philippot, P., Nachtergael, H., Galand, B., Schlienz, N., Stammel, N., Yabar, Y., Blume, M., MacKay, L., & Harvey, K. (2007). Homelessness in Europe and the United States: A Comparison of Prevalence and Public Opinion. Journal of Social Issues, 63(3), 505–524. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2007.00521.x

Wright, S., Hughes, K., Greenhalgh, E., & Campbell, L. (2024). Women's Rough Sleeping Census 2023 Report. Change Grow Live. https://www.solacewomensaid.org/first-national-census-of-women-sleeping-rough-reveals-gender-bias-in-government-costs-and-rough-sleeping-policy/