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EqualHouse

EqualHouse

Homelessness Among Refugees and Migrants

June 2026

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List of Abbreviations

AMMR	Asylum and Migration Management Regulation
CADA	Centre d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile = Reception centre for asylum seekers
CAES	Centre d'Accueil et d'Évaluation des Situations = Centres for Reception and Assessment
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CCAC	Closed Controlled Access Centres
CoE	Council of Europe
CoEU	Council of the European Union
CPH	Centres Provisoires d'Hébergement = Temporary Accommodation Center
DdP	Defensor del Pueblo
DJHAM-IE	Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Ireland
EC	European Commission
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ECSR	ECSR European Committee of Social Rights
EMN	European Migration Network
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
EOH	European Observatory of Homelessness
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
ETHOS	European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions

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FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
FEDASIL	Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FPL	Fondation Pour le Logement
GCR	Greek Refugee Council
Glimer	Governance and the Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees)
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HUDA	L'hébergement d'urgence pour les demandeurs d'asile = Emergency shelter for asylum seekers
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NERM	National Emergency Responsive Mechanism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD-SPD-DoELSA	OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
PFC	Partnering for Change
PRADHA	Programme Régional d'Accueil et d'Hébergement des Demandeurs d'Asile = Regional Asylum Seeker Reception and Shelter Programme
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
StC	Save the Children
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union

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Glossary of terms

Glossary of Terms	
International Protection Applicant / Asylum Seeker	These terms may be used interchangeably but we largely use them as follows in this report. 'International Protection' is granted by international community to the individuals or groups who have crossed the international borders of their home-country, where they cannot return, as this would endanger them, and would breach the fundamental principle of 'non-refoulment' (IOM 2019, p. 114), which forbids a country from expelling refugees and asylum seekers from their ground, exposing them to risks to their freedom and life. Any person seeking 'international protection' is an 'asylum seeker,' or an 'international protection applicant' as long as they have not yet received a final decision on their claim by the country where they have submitted their request (IOM 2019, p. 14).
Beneficiary of International Protection	A person who meets the criteria set by Regulation (EU) 2024/1347, to be qualified with refugee status or subsidiary protection. The aforementioned Regulation further determines certain criteria universally applied within the European Union (EU) for attributing to International Protection Applicants/ Asylum Seekers the appropriate status.
Beneficiary of Temporary Protection	A person who meets the criteria set by the Temporary Protection Council Directive 2001/55/EC that provides a framework for the European Union (EU) to address exceptional emergency situations that involve an ongoing or imminent mass flow of displaced people from countries outside the EU, into EU territory. Currently, Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are deemed the people fleeing Ukraine since the Russian invasion in 2022.
Discrimination in the housing market	Discrimination in the housing market occurs when individuals seeking to get housed are treated unequally on the grounds of certain protected characteristics, such as, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, and others.
Reception Conditions	Reception Conditions refer to all the supports that become available to people who have applied for International Protection. These supports

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	aim to assist them and to ensure adequate living conditions. See further discussion in Chapter 1.
Refugee	According to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention, a 'refugee' is someone who due to 'a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (IOM 2019, p. 171).
Unaccompanied minor	An unaccompanied minor is a child, under the age of 18, who is outside of their country of origin and separated from their legal or customary caregiver. In this report we also use the term unaccompanied young person to include unaccompanied minors who have turned 18. An alternative term - 'separated child' i- s sometimes used when referred to in research reports or by interview participants. While distinctions are sometimes made between the two terms, they are used interchangeably here

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Executive Summary

Work Package 7 of EqualHouse, titled *Tackling Acute Housing Inequalities Among Refugees and Migrants,* aims to examine the extent of homelessness among refugees and migrants and to identify service solutions to homelessness among this cohort. To this end, Deliverable 7.1 (D.71) reports on evidence gathered via a mixed method approach. Combining statistical analysis, a literature review, and new qualitative insights, this deliverable examines the overrepresentation of migrants in homelessness and the underlying causes of this.

The report first outlines the EU migration policy context for four groups (international protection applicants and beneficiaries, beneficiaries of temporary protection, mobile EU citizens, and third-country nationals) highlighting its complexity and impact on housing pathways. It also presents the legal and policy context as it relates to homelessness and outlines the ETHOS Light Framework, which defines homelessness across six categories and twelve living situations, from rough sleeping to staying with family or friends.

The report then examines homelessness statistics on refugees and migrants, highlighting major data gaps and challenges, including inconsistent definitions, methods, and national datasets. Drawing on four sources - the Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, the OECD Migration Data Brief, the EU-SILC Housing Difficulties Module and the European Homelessness Count – it finds that refugees and migrants appear overrepresented in homelessness numbers, where they are counted, relative to their size in the overall population.

The report also reviews the existing literature, highlighting three key migration transition points linked to increased risks of homelessness and housing precarity: arrival, change of status, and family reunification.

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Migration Transition Points

Transition Point 1: Point of arrival in a country → **Transition Point 2:** Point of changed status → **Transition Point 3:** Point of arrival of family members following family reunification

New qualitative evidence from interviews with 20 professionals across seven European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, and Poland) is also presented. The findings from both the literature review and the interviews highlight intersecting structural causes of housing exclusion among migrants and refugees at the three transition points. It is evident that among migrants and refugees in Europe, homelessness arises from interconnected systemic, structural, policy, and individual factors that emerge at critical stages of the migration journey. In particular, the qualitative data highlights five interrelated themes of exclusion which limit access to adequate housing and heighten the risk of homelessness, especially at key transition points.

Intersecting Structural Causes of Housing Exclusion and Homelessness Among Migrants and Refugees

- Exclusionary Welfare & Housing Policies and Practices
- Exclusionary Reception Polices and Practices
- Exclusionary Bureaucracy
- Exclusionary Beliefs and Practices: Racism & Discrimination
- Exclusionary Support Structures

Overall, the findings underscore how intersecting structural factors, shaped by migration policies and compounded by racism and discrimination, drive homelessness risk at key migration transition points.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Work package seven (WP7) of EqualHouse '*Tackling Acute Housing Inequalities Among Refugees and Migrants*' examines homelessness among this specific target group. Our key objectives within this work package are to:

(i) Examine the extent of homelessness among migrant groups who are at risk of homelessness (henceforth 'refugees and migrants').

(ii) Identify service solutions to homelessness among refugees and migrants focusing particularly on the key migration and housing transitions experienced by this cohort.

(iii) Develop policy tools and resources to assist governments and service providers in responding to homelessness among this cohort and disseminate these.

Our current report, *Deliverable 7.1*, focuses on the first objective and examines the extent of homelessness among refugees and migrants throughout Europe. Overall, a mixed method approach is used. After setting the scene in this opening chapter, we then present a quantitative analysis of statistical data on migrants and homelessness, bringing together the available evidence of the extent of homelessness among refugees and migrants throughout Europe. Following this, the report explores pathways into homelessness, examining the factors that contribute to the over-representation of refugees and migrants in homelessness statistics. Two methodologies are used for this: firstly, a review of academic and grey literature which serves to synthesise current knowledge. This synthesis is set within a migration transition points framework, where three key transition points are identified - the point of arrival in a country, the point of changed status, and the point of being joined by family members through family reunification. Secondly, in order to bring forward this existing evidence base, we then present new data from our qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with professionals, thus again furthering understanding in relation to the causes of homelessness in this context, again with reference to the transition points.

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To begin with, this chapter positions WP7 within the context of the broader EqualHouse project, with particular reference to WP3. It then discusses key terminology, before briefly outlining the legal and policy contexts in relation to both migration and homelessness. It discusses housing-welfare regimes and presents the ETHOS Light Homelessness Framework. The chapter then closes by proving an overview of the structure of the deliverable as a whole.

1.2 EqualHouse and Work Package 7

Our research here builds on the work undertaken in Work Package three (WP3) '*Profiling and Explaining the Scale, Character and Interaction of Income, Wealth and Housing Inequalities in Europe*,' of the EqualHouse project. Within that Work Package, our colleagues profiled the extent of homelessness in Europe and found that housing precarity, including homelessness, is rising throughout Europe. Indeed, FEANTSA estimates that nearly 1.3 million people sleep rough or stay in emergency or other homeless accommodation in the EU plus the UK every night (Horvat, 2024; Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024). WP3 data suggested an overlap between migration and homelessness, and this is now explored further here. It is evident that increased attention must be given to accurately enumerating homelessness among asylum seekers, refugees, mobile EU citizens, third country nationals and undocumented migrants.

As WP3 has detailed, data on homelessness is challenging to compare due to different definitions, a range of national contexts and varying data collection methods. Refugee and migrant homelessness is even more challenging to capture due to additional methodological, legal, and administrative limitations. When there is data, it is often only about country of origin, which does not provide much insight into the specific drivers or the differences between migrant cohorts in different administrative situations. Regardless, the patchy and incomplete data that is available do show that refugees and migrants are increasingly impacted by homelessness across Europe. As such a better understanding about homelessness in this context is needed. This report aims to address this.

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1.3 A note on terminology

Within this report and this work package, it is recognised that refugees and migrants constitute a very broad group of individuals, of diverse backgrounds, facing different circumstances, and whose lives are impacted by very different policy and legislative contexts. A full list of terminology is provided in the Glossary (see above). ***For ease, we are using the phrase 'refugees and migrants' to encompass a broad range of individuals***. In this report, the term 'refugee' is referring, broadly, to people of refugee background, including international protection applicants (asylum seekers), beneficiaries of temporary protection (people who have fled from Ukraine) and people who have been granted protection (e.g. refugee status or subsidiary protection). The report does not focus on programme refugees. The term 'migrants' constitutes an even broader cohort, including mobile EU citizens, third country migrant workers on various types of visas, third country nationals on student visas, and people who are considered 'irregular', either because they entered a country without a visa or because they became irregular due to the expiry of their visa or other factors.[1] When necessary, we of course differentiate within the categories, for example if we are distinguishing between the rights of those seeking international protection and those who are beneficiaries of international protection or between the rights of mobile EU citizens and third country migrant workers.

[1] It's worthy to highlight the nuances between the different terms employed here. According to IOM (2019), 'an asylum seeker' is a person seeking international protection and who has not yet received a final decision on their claim by the country where they have submitted their request (14). A 'refugee' according to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention, is someone who due to 'a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (IOM 2019, p. 171). As such a 'refugee' is eligible for the protection provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (IOM 2019, p. 170). However, a 'refugee' remains an 'asylum seeker' for as long as their asylum request is examined by the country where they filed their request that will eventually grant their status. As IOM notes, not all 'asylum seekers' will be recognised as 'refugees,' but all 'refugees' have been through the stage of 'asylum seeker' (2019, p. 14). The term 'migrant' does not correspond to a legal definition and is used indiscreetly to describe any person who moves away from their usual place of residence, regardless of whether it is within or across the international borders of their country (ibid, p. 132).

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1.4 Migration and Asylum: Legal and policy context

National migration policies directly affect migrants' exposure to homelessness. Such policies are situated within common EU legal frameworks. This section provides a brief overview of the legal frameworks governing the rights of migrants, including refugees, international protection applicants, and beneficiaries of temporary protection in Europe, with a particular focus on their implications for housing. It begins with an overview of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), before briefly explaining Temporary Protection, EU free movement legislation and finally other relevant legislation for third country nationals. It should be noted that European migration policy is undergoing a period of significant shift with a growing focus on border control and deterrence. Organisations working with homeless people have repeatedly warned that increased homelessness and destitution among migrants and asylum seekers in Europe is one of the effects of this shift (FEANTSA, 2025).

Whilst we describe a series of distinct legal frameworks below, it is important to note that people may fall under several different legal frameworks over time.

1.4.1 The Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

Refugees and asylum seekers/ international protection applicants are entitled to protection under international and EU law. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol establish the right to seek asylum and prohibit states from returning individuals to danger. The Convention also sets out minimum standards for the treatment of refugees, including access to housing, employment and education.

In the EU, the *Common European Asylum System (CEAS)*, the legal and policy framework which sought to harmonise the asylum system and to establish uniform standards for people seeking international protection within the European Union, has been faced with significant implementation challenges. For this reason, the framework has been reformed on several occasions, most recently through the new *EU Pact on Migration and Asylum* (hereafter referred to as 'the

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Pact'). The Pact was set to come into effect on 12th June 2026[2]. The European Commission describes the Pact as "a set of new rules managing migration and establishing a common asylum system at EU level, that deliver results while remaining grounded in European Values" (EC, 2024). The four pillars of the Pact outlined by the EC are: 1) Securing external borders 2) Fast and efficient procedures, 3) An effective system of solidarity and responsibility, and 4) Embedding migration in international partnerships.

The Pact comprises 10 legislative instruments. Of particular relevance to this report are the recast *Reception Conditions Directive*, the former *Dublin Regulation* replaced under the Pact by the *Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR)*, and the *Qualification Regulation* each of which is now briefly discussed.

Firstly, the recast Reception Conditions Directive ((EU) 2024/1346) sets minimum standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, including material reception conditions such as housing, food, and healthcare. It broadly reflects many of the provisions of previous iterations, which have been met with significant implementation problems as regards housing: overcrowding, poor living conditions, delays in access to accommodation, substandard housing and problematic island 'hotspots' (Radjenovic, 2024).

Secondly, under Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the Pact - the *Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR)* – the first country of entry system that existed under the Dublin Regulation has been maintained: this means that the first country a person enters in the EU is responsible for their asylum claim. In addition, the AMMR adds an obligation on people to apply in the first country they enter, (EMN, 2026a). Importantly, under the Pact, different reception conditions will apply to those applicants who are asking for protection in a country other than the one of first entry. Entitlement to full reception conditions will only apply in the country responsible for a person's asylum claim; thus, if asylum seekers move on from the first country of arrival, member states can withdraw full reception

[2] The research undertaken for this report was conducted before the implementation of the Pact. Therefore, the literature and qualitative data will frequently reference pre-Pact conditions and terminology.

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conditions (EMN, 2026b). This has obvious implications for homelessness among international protection applicants.

Thirdly, the *Qualification Regulation* ((EU) 2024/1347) defines which criteria must be met for refugee status and subsidiary protection and what rights, including to housing, are associated with each status. Accordingly, refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries should receive equal treatment to nationals in housing access (in principle).[3] Importantly, there is an obligation on member states to ensure refugees have effective access to their rights while residence permits are issued, including the right to accommodation (Art. 24(2) and Art. 20(3)). Uncertainties remain on the exact nature of such accommodation and the Regulation does not acknowledge the transition period of recognised refugees from reception facilities into autonomous housing.

The Pact has been subject to criticism from a range of diverse actors, including civil society organisations working in the migration and homelessness fields (e.g. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), 2026; European Network Against Racism (ENAR), 2023; Barbu, 2022). Regarding homelessness specifically, FEANTSA has voiced concerns about prolonged stays in inadequate 'hotspot' facilities and reduced safeguards for vulnerable groups, such as families, unaccompanied minors, and people with specific protection needs (Barbu, 2022). In addition, organisations have raised concerns about the threat the Pact poses to the right to seek asylum in the EU and have argued that the Pact will "engender a proliferation of human rights violations against people across Europe due to their migration status" (A World of Neighbours et al., 2024, p. 2).

1.4.2 Temporary Protection

The situation of people fleeing Ukraine differs from other forcibly displaced individuals who arrive in Europe. The 2001 Temporary Protection Directive allows the European Union to respond immediately and provide temporary protection in the event of a "mass influx of displaced persons". The Directive establishes

[3] A distinction is made, however, in the case of subsidiary protection holders: according to Article 31 (1) (2) equal treatment in social assistance for subsidiary protection holders may be limited to "core benefits" where this possibility is allowed under national law.

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"minimum standards" for giving temporary protection and promotes a "balance of efforts between member states". Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time. This allowed people fleeing from Ukraine to enter EU countries and be provided with protection on a temporary basis, thereby precluding the need to apply for international protection. Provision for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) has varied across countries and over time. Regarding access to suitable accommodation (or access to the means to obtain housing), evidence from the European Migration Network (EMN) and the Organisation for Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that countries have used a variety of approaches including the provision by public authorities of accommodation or the provision of subsidies to enable access to private housing (EMN & OECD, 2025). In addition, some states have also given financial support to those providing private accommodation. Accommodation differs in type and quality and often includes collective settings. The length of time that accommodation is made available also varies, as does eligibility (EMN & OECD, 2025). Of note, and of relevance to this report, is that some countries have "scaled back" the provision of social assistance and state accommodation in more recent years (EMN & OECD, 2025). It is also important to note that BOTP generally have access to the labour market immediately upon arrival in EU countries, unlike displaced individuals from other non-EU countries. This of course has implications for housing access.

1.4.3. European Union Free Movement

Free movement is one of the core principles of the European Union. The right of freedom of movement is protected by several articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (e.g. Articles 20, 21 and 45). In addition, Article 45 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights guarantees the right to free movement (Morot-Sir, C. & Pérez, 2024).

Under *Directive 2004/38/EC* of the European Union EU citizens can move to and reside in a country for up to 90 days without conditions, as long as they do not become a burden on the social assistance system of the country in question. They can continue to reside in the country beyond the 90 days if they satisfy specific conditions, such as being employed or seeking a job (with a 'genuine chance' of

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finding employment), being self-employed or a student, or having sufficient financial resources and comprehensive health insurance. These conditions and the way they are interpreted by Member States shape the extent to which EU citizens are at risk of homelessness, and the support they can access if they do become homeless.

In 2023, the EC issued the *Guidance on the right of free movement of EU citizens and their families,* relating to Directive 2004/38/EC, with the intention to incorporate relevant case law since 2009 and provide further clarity on the implementation of the Directive. However, concern has been expressed that the 2023 Guidance has failed to address some of the issues that have contributed to destitution and breaching of rights among mobile EU citizens, including failure to address the circumstances in which Member States cannot refuse to provide social benefits to vulnerable EU citizens. This leaves economically non-active mobile EU citizens exposed to homelessness because of difficulties in accessing social services (Morot-Sir & Pérez, 2024).

1.4.4 Other EU legislation relevant to third country nationals

Third country nationals (i.e. people who are not nationals of the EU, EEA or Switzerland) can fall under EU legal frameworks other than those outlined above, for example as students or workers. EU law regulates conditions for entry and residence in these situations, with direct and indirect consequences for access to housing and shelter. For example, the EU Directive 2014/36/EU on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers (known as Seasonal Workers Directive) sets out standards for accommodation (Article 20). The EU Single Permit Directive (EU) 2024/1233) regulates the application process for a combined residence and work permit for non-EU nationals. The Students and Researchers Directive (EU) 2016/801) covers admission and rights of non-EU nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training and voluntary service. EU Directive 2003/109/EC, which is currently being recast, regulates the status of third-country nationals who are long term residents. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide details of all this legislation, it is important to note its relevance to the housing situation of third country nationals in Europe.

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Undocumented or irregular migrants are those who have entered, live or work in an EU Member State without having legal permission. EU legislation also regulates access to basic rights for people in such situations. A particularly significant piece of legislation in this context is the Returns Regulation, which is being negotiated at the time or writing. It aims to establish a new common European System for Returns. It has been strongly criticised by civil society and human rights organisations for failing to safeguard basic rights and protections in relation to detention and deportation. The Regulation increases the maximum period of detention and expands the grounds for which people can be detained, which includes the absence of a reliable address. The homeless sector has expressed serious concerns that the Regulation will lead to more destitution and homelessness amongst undocumented migrants (see FEANTSA, 2025).

1.5 Homelessness: Legal & Policy Context

The European Union has limited competence for social policy and no direct competence for housing policy. Article 153(1)(j) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) allows the Union to support and complement the activities of Member States in the combating of social exclusion. Furthermore, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union underlines that, to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources. The revised European Social Charter also recognises the right for everybody to access housing of an adequate standard and to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination.

The EU has gradually stepped-up its policy attention to homelessness. The current framework for social policy coordination in the EU is the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), which sets out 20 key principles for fair labour markets and welfare systems in the Member States. The EPSR is not a binding document but a reaffirmation of existing rights that is supposed to orientate social policies. Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on housing and assistance for the homeless recognises that people in need should have access to social housing or high-quality housing assistance; that vulnerable people have the right to protection against forced eviction and that homeless people must be provided

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with adequate accommodation and services. In 2021, the European Union launched its first political initiative on homelessness – the European Platform on Combating Homelessness. Through the Platform, European institutions, Member States and civil society committed to working together towards ending homelessness in the EU. The Platform focuses on learning, data collection and analysis, and EU funding and finance. In December 2025, the European Commission launched its first ever Affordable Housing Plan, in which homelessness is a priority. In addition, in May 2026, it launched a new Anti-Poverty Strategy, setting out measures to eradicate poverty including a Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on Fighting Housing Exclusion. EU funding also plays a role in the fight against homelessness, notably through the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund.

1.6. Housing-Welfare Regimes Across the EU

The rights of migrants and asylum seekers and refugees intersect with the way housing and welfare policies are organised. Homelessness and housing exclusion in the EU are generally influenced by the varied *welfare regimes* (i.e. how countries approach social welfare and services), and the varied *housing regimes* (i.e. a country's approach to providing and regulating housing) across EU member states.

While housing systems or regimes are related to welfare regimes, they have their own dynamics. Various attempts have been made over time to categorise housing-welfare regimes. Work Package 3 of Equalhouse provides a detailed discussion of these. In that Work Package, Dewilde et al (2025), drawing on previous research, distinguish between 6 different housing-welfare regimes, as follows: (1) Social-democratic unitary rental market countries, (2) Conservative-corporatist unitary rental market countries, (3) North-west European homeownership countries with a dual rental market, (4) Central and Eastern European countries, (5) Baltic states (6) Southern European family-based homeownership countries. In Chapter 4 of this report we follow this categorisation

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of *housing-welfare regimes* for grouping different countries when selecting participants for qualitative interviews.

However, it is important to note that housing-welfare regimes alone do not adequately explain levels of homelessness. It is likely that this is especially the case when it comes to homelessness amongst migrants and refugees, given that their access to housing and welfare systems is governed by eligibility rules that depend on their legal / administrative situation.

1.7 Homelessness: ETHOS Light Framework.

The deliverable uses FEANTSA's ETHOS Light framework, a harmonised definition of homelessness used for statistical and data collection purposes. ETHOS Light is a practical, pragmatic tool used as a model of reference for operationalising and distinguishing different sub-categories of homelessness. It is derived from the full ETHOS typology, which is a conceptual definition covering also inadequate and insecure housing. The definition uses six operational categories and refers to twelve distinct living situations ranging from sleeping in public spaces to staying with family and friends. Table 1 describes these categories in detail.

Table 1: ETHOS Light Framework

Operational category		Living situation		Definition
1	People living rough	1	Public spaces/external spaces	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People living in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided
		4	Temporary accommodation	
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	

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		6	Women's shelters or refuge accommodation	
4	People living in institutions	7	Health care institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
		10	Non-conventional buildings	
		11	Temporary structures	
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Source: FEANTSA (2017)

The ETHOS Light framework does not specifically distinguish the living situations of homeless migrants. Homeless migrants may be found in any of the living situations. Specific settings like accommodation for asylum seekers may or may not be included under accommodation for the homeless or institutional living, depending on the context.

1.8 Structure of this Report

This deliverable is organised into five chapters.

Chapter 1 introduced the EqualHouse project and the objectives of Work Package 7 (WP7) and provides a brief overview of the relevant legal and policy context as it relates to refugees and migrants.

Chapter 2 sets the scene by presenting the available quantitative evidence on the scale of homelessness among refugees and migrants. We consider a variety of data sources. We will also highlight the myriad of significant methodological challenges that limit cross-country comparability of statistics.

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Chapter 3 brings the discussion forward by exploring existing literature as it relates to the over representation of refugees and migrants in the homelessness data presented in Chapter 2. It explores the literature in relation to homelessness among refugees and migrants, with a particular focus on key transition points during which the risk of homelessness is heightened. The chapter is based on a review of academic and grey literature.

Chapter 4 compliments Chapter 3 by presenting new data from qualitative interviews with key informants, again shedding light on why refugees and migrants are over-represented in homelessness statistics. It sets out the methodology including the sampling strategy, data collection process and ethical considerations before then outlining the key themes from the key informant interviews. In particular, the chapter focuses on professional expert's perspectives on structural causes of exclusion from housing.

Chapter 5 discusses the main findings from both the quantitative evidence and the qualitative interviews and sets out conclusions and next steps for our work package.

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Chapter 2: Scale of Homelessness Among Migrants and Refugees

2.1 Introduction

In order to address the objective of examining the extent of homelessness among migrant groups who are at risk of homelessness, this chapter provides a quantitative overview of homelessness among migrants and refugees in Europe. We begin by addressing the substantial methodological challenges that limit data comparison. Following that, we collate the available evidence from a number of data sets. These data sets are: *FEANTSA's Tenth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe*, *the OECD Migration Data Brief*, the *2024 European Homelessness Counts* project results, and the *2023 EU-SILC Retrospective Housing Difficulties Module*.

2.2 Methodological challenges with data collection and comparability

As discussed in Deliverable 3.1, Chapter 8, of the EqualHouse project, there are substantial challenges to producing comparative data on homelessness, due to three key factors: (1) the lack of common definition, (2) the absence of comparable methodologies, and (3) widely differing national contexts (Coego et al., 2004; Hermans et al., 2025; Horvat & Coupechoux, 2024; OECD-SPD-DoELSA, 2024). These limitations are even more pronounced when it comes to data on migration and homelessness (Dumont et al., 2024).

A primary factor is the absence of a unified definition and standardized criteria, as individual countries utilize divergent frameworks and proxies. Migration status or place of birth is often not recorded in administrative registers, rather different proxies are used: e.g., most countries rely on citizenship data as a proxy for migrant status – i.e., these countries classify migrants as 'non-citizens' of the given country (Dumont et al., 2024). Other countries, e.g., Denmark and Sweden, include only migrants with legal residence in homelessness statistics (Dumont et al., 2024). In the absence of detailed data on the immigration status of homeless individuals, it is often impossible to know which migrant subgroups are represented in the data (e.g. EU vs. non-EU, refugees vs. other migrants).

With regards to data collection methodologies, there are additional challenges. Much homelessness data is collected via service-based methods (e.g. counting individuals involved with a particular service), to which some migrants may not

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have access (Dumont et al., 2024). Undocumented individuals, in particular, can face barriers to accessing services and may wish to avoid being enumerated. The "service statistics paradox" may also impact findings (Hermans et al., 2025) and data collection might exclude migration status for ethical or language barrier reasons (Dumont et al., 2024).

Finally, as noted in the previous section, individuals residing in temporary accommodation for asylum seekers/ refugees are often not included in national homelessness numbers in many countries, again leading to strong challenges in international comparisons (Dumont et al., 2024; Hermans et al., 2025). Table 2 below, from the OECD, shows in which countries temporary accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees is included in estimates of homelessness. OECD data indicates that in the EU and UK, only Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain include asylum seeker accommodation in national homelessness statistics. Refugee accommodation is included in homelessness numbers in Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, England only.

Table 2: Inclusion of specific accommodation in national homelessness estimates

Table HC3.1.1 Inclusion of temporary accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees in the headline estimate of homelessness		
	Yes	No
Temporary accommodation for asylum seekers	Australia, Belgium (Brussels), Canada, Costa Rica, Colombia, France, New Zealand, Portugal, and Spain	Austria, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States
Temporary accommodation for refugees	Australia, Belgium (Brussels), Canada, Costa Rica, Colombia, France, Germany, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom	Austria, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, and the United States

Source: OECD (Dumont et al., 2024)

In some Member States, the system of homeless services and system of provision of reception for asylum seekers overlap, whilst in others, they are separate. These factors result in datasets that cannot be reliably compared across

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national borders. The OECD also argues that comparative and comprehensive data on homelessness among migrants does not exist (Dumont et al., 2024). However, what they conclude is that in countries for which disaggregated data on homelessness among migrants exist, estimates suggest that they are overrepresented among individuals experiencing homelessness (Dumont et al., 2024). In other words, while migrants may be systematically undercounted in official statistics, they remain disproportionately vulnerable to homelessness and are overrepresented when figures are available.

2.3 Scale of homelessness among refugees and migrants

Bearing these limitations in mind, the available evidence suggests that poor housing conditions and homelessness among migrants remain persistent challenges across EU Member States. In the following sections, we present different sources of data on this topic. Table 3 shows the available transnational datasets and what indicators are available in each, with the proxies for migration status in bold. For each data source the table outlines which ETHOS Light categories it covers, what indicators are available in the dataset and what timeframe is used. In order, the data sets are: *FEANTSA's Tenth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe*, the *OECD Migration Data Brief*, the *2021 Population and Housing Census*, the *2024 European Homelessness Counts* project results, and the *2023 EU-SILC Retrospective Housing Difficulties Module*. After the table we discuss each of these datasets apart from the 2021 Census data. While we considered also using *the 2021 Census data* we determined that the quality of the data as it relates to homelessness is inadequate for detailed comparison between counties (see WP3 for details).

Of the four datasets that we discuss, the first two - *FEANTSA's Tenth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe* and the *OECD Migration Data Brief* are attempts by researchers to bring together multiple sources of data on this topic, and the second two - the *2024 European Homelessness Counts* project results, and the *2023 EU-SILC Retrospective Housing Difficulties Module* - are newly collected datasets.

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Table 3: Indicators available in different datasets

Data source	ETHOS Light coverage	Indicators	Timeframe
FEANTSA and Fondation Pour le Logement (FPL) (Tenth Overview)	Country dependent		Point-in-time (PIT) or Flow, depending on the country
OECD	Country dependent		
2021 Population and Housing Census	Totals only and occasionally ETHOS Light 1 can be isolated	Gender, age, Current activity status, Size of locality, Place of birth, Country of citizenship, Year of arrival in the country, Residence year before	
EU-SILC housing difficulties	ETHOS Light 1, 2-3, 5 and 6, (retrospective) ETHOS Light 6 (current)	Gender, 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
EU homelessness counts	Primarily ETHOS Light 1-3, additional categories in some cities	Gender, Age, Household composition, Length of time homeless, Triggers leading to homelessness, Nationality	Point-in-time

2.3.1 Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe

For the past nine years, FEANTSA and Fondation Pour le Logement (FPL) have produced an annual *Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe*. The latest national and international statistics and data are identified, collated, and synthesised in an attempt to provide a European snapshot of homeless and housing exclusion across Member States. The Overviews are key annual reports providing a systematic look at housing exclusion trends and data gaps across the EU, despite the many methodological challenges.

The *Tenth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe* (Charbonnier & Coupechoux, 2025) collected the most recent available national statistics on homelessness. We further examined the data to see what information can be found in each country's national statistics on migration status. The below Table 4 summarizes these finds.

Of the countries with homelessness data, 13 countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland,

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Portugal, Spain and Sweden) specify whether homeless individuals are of migrant or refugee background. In a majority of countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden) the majority of the counted homeless population are not of migrant or refugee background, although the numbers are close to even in Ireland, Netherlands and Spain. Conversely in Germany and Luxembourg, migrants or refugees are the majority of homeless persons, though the number in Germany is noted to likely be an overestimate. In interpreting this data, it is important to keep in mind that different countries are using different definitions of homelessness, meaning that, for example, some include people staying in accommodation for asylum seekers whilst others do not.

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Table 4: Information on migration status in national homelessness statistics

Country	Year	Data Collection Method	Period	Details	Total Number of Homeless People	Total number of Migrants	Explanation	Sources
Austria	2022	Registration	1 year	The data collected refers to people registered as homeless on the central population registry and on the lists of certain accommodation services throughout the year	19,667	NA	No migration breakdown	Statistik Austria

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Belgium	2022 2023	Count Extrapolation	1 night 1 week	The figures are the results of point-in-time counts (night counts and statistical data collection) conducted in several urban areas	45,860	NA	No national estimate available for migrants/refugees among the homeless population. However, recent surveys have made efforts to address migration issues: The King Baudouin Fondation (KBF) /Regional administrations' survey examines, for each regional administration, some criteria related to migration: Belgian vs. non-Belgian nationality; born in Belgium vs. born abroad; among non-Belgians: share with temporary residence permits and share without valid residence permits. However, regional-level data remain unavailable (regional estimates could be calculated but are not presented in the report). Bruss'help conducted extensive profiling (2,654 questionnaires across 42 organizations), to analyze the profiles and trajectories of homeless persons in the Brussels region, with some key results regarding migration profiles: 42.7% Belgian, 11.0% other EU nationals, 42.3% non-EU nationals. Among non-Belgian nationals, 49.9% lack valid residence documents (28.6% of total sample). Distribution varies by ETHOS typology: Belgians predominate in shelters (54.3%), institutions (62.9%), and staying with others (59.5%), while those without valid permits are the majority in emergency accommodation (45.9%) and non-conventional housing (51.4%). In public spaces, Belgians and those without valid permits are equally represented (42.8% vs. 43.2%).	Bruss'help KBF & Administrations régionales
Czechia	2022	Count Extrapolation	4 months	The count involves extrapolating results of surveys (night counts and statistical data collection) conducted in most of the country's municipalities	100,728	NA	No migration breakdown	SocioFactor

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Denmark	2024	Count	1 week	The national biennial survey, via questionnaire, covers homeless people known to accommodation centres, medical/social services, and local authorities	5,989	1,173	Among the estimated 5,989 homeless persons, 1,173 are of foreign nationality (non-Danish): 2% from other Nordic countries, 3% from other EU countries, 2% from other European countries, 7% from Middle Eastern origins, 6% from African origins, and 2% from other regions. People without a valid residence permit are largely excluded from these statistics because of their very limited entitlements to access welfare services in Denmark. Additionally, 450 homeless migrants without legal residence status were counted separately. This group is predominantly concentrated in Copenhagen (373 persons, 82.9%), with 195 sleeping rough and 194 in night shelters. This figure likely represents a significant underestimate, as migrants without legal residence status have limited access to welfare services and may remain undetected by outreach services.	Danish Center for Social Science Research(VIVE)
Estonia	2021	Registration	1 year	The annual figures recorded are exclusively of people who do not have an official address and use temporary accommodation services	1,068	660	Among the 1,068 homeless persons registered, 408 are Estonian nationals (38%) and 660 are of foreign nationality (62%), including 564 Russian nationals, 94 of other nationalities, and 2 of unknown nationality. Estonian statistics collect data on nationality but provide no further migration-related indicators.	Eesti Statistika
Finland	2024	Count	1 night	The count consists of a compilation of data collected by the municipalities from social assistance services registries and applications for social housing	3,806	794	Among the homeless population, 794 are immigrants (21% of total homeless persons), representing a decrease of 37 persons compared to 2023. Finnish statistics provide only aggregate data on immigrants among the homeless, with no breakdown by nationality or other migration-related indicators.	Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus

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France	2023	Count	1 night	The data shows the capacity of accommodation centres and temporary housing, i.e. the number of places available in emergency centres, reintegration centres, and treatment centres	322,831	116,300	French data correspond to accommodation and temporary housing capacity (available places in emergency, integration, and stabilization centres): 322,831 total places. No detailed data on homeless persons' profiles, but the number of places in various facilities provides a minimum estimate of persons concerned. Notably, 116,300 places are designated for asylum seekers and statutory refugees across different schemes (CADA, HUDA, CAES, PRAHDA, CPH)[4], providing a minimum estimate of this population among the homeless.	Fondation pour le Logement des Défavorisés
Germany	2024	Count Survey	1 night 1 week	The census, which covers people in accommodation centres, is supplemented by extrapolating the results of a local count of rough sleepers and people living with family/friends	531,601	406,212	Estimated number of homeless persons of foreign nationality (non-German). This figure is likely overestimated as it does not account for potential double counting (10,570 identified overlaps between the GISS/Verian study and Destatis data, though detailed profiles of these duplicates are unavailable). While the absolute number may lack precision, the GISS/Verian report provides valuable insights into foreign nationals' representation across different forms of homelessness: 35.9% of rough sleepers (ETHOS 1), 18.7% of those staying with friends/family (ETHOS 6), and 86% of those in accommodation centers (ETHOS 3).	Destatis GISS/Verian
Hungary	2024	Count	1 night	Annual survey, via questionnaire, reaching some people sleeping rough and people staying in emergency accommodation	4,904	NA	No migration breakdown	Menhely Alapítvány

[4] CADA = Centre d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile = Reception centre for asylum seekers
HUDA = L'hébergement d'urgence pour les demandeurs d'asile = Emergency shelter for asylum seekers
CAES = Centre d'Accueil et d'Évaluation des Situations = Centres for Reception and Assessment
PRADHA = Programme Régional d'Accueil et d'Hébergement des Demandeurs d'Asile = Regional Asylum Seeker Reception and Shelter Programme
CPH = Centres Provisoires d'Hébergement = Temporary Accommodation Centre

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				centres and temporary shelters				
Ireland	2025	Count	1 week	The figures produced monthly by the local authorities relate to the number of homeless people using temporary accommodation financed by the State	10,683	5,133	Among the 10,683 homeless persons accessing State-funded emergency accommodation in January 2025, 5,550 are Irish nationals (52%) and 5,133 are of foreign nationality (48%), including 2,316 from EEA/UK countries (21.7%) and 2,817 from non-EEA countries (26.3%). Regional data reveal significant disparities: foreign nationals represent 56% of the homeless population in Dublin, 41% in the North-East region, compared to 21% in the Mid-West and 22% in the South-East.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Italy	2021	Registration	1 year	The data, from a census, relates to people registered with an address service at the municipal registry office or with support services	96,197	36,324	Italian census data cover persons registered with a virtual address at municipal registration offices or support services: 96,197 persons (roofless and houseless). Among them, 36,324 are of foreign nationality (37.7%) and 59,873 are Italian nationals. However, persons present in Italy without legal residence status remain uncounted.	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica
Latvia	2023	Registration	1 year	The annual statistics produced by the Ministry of Social Affairs covers people accommodated in a night shelter or refuge for homeless people	6,151	NA	No migration breakdown	Labklājības ministrija
Lituania	2023	Registration	1 year	The administrative data collected as part of the national census relates to people staying in a shelter or temporary housing managed by social services	6,194	NA	No migration breakdown	Statistics Lithuania

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Luxembourg	2023	Count	1 night	The figures gathered from about 20 management organisations refers to the number of adults in accommodation centres	728	508	Among 728 homeless persons in night shelters and emergency accommodation: 30.2% Luxembourgish nationals (220), 69.8% foreign nationals (508), including 40.8% EU nationals (297) and 26.6% non-EU nationals (194). Foreign nationals represent 76.9% of night shelter users and 54.7% of emergency accommodation users.	Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région
Netherlands	2023	Count Extrapolation	1 night	The census, based on a compilation of data extracted from the social welfare registries, covers people aged 18-65 years registered as homeless	30,600	12,852	Among the 30,600 homeless persons, 42% were born outside the Netherlands (12,852 persons), including 2,448 born in Europe (8%) and 10,404 born outside Europe (34%). Dutch statistics also track parental origin: 36% were born in the Netherlands with both parents Dutch-born, 3% born in the Netherlands with parents from Europe, and 20% born in the Netherlands with parents from outside Europe. Significant geographic disparities: in the four largest cities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht), 80% of homeless persons have non-Dutch origins (42% born outside Europe), compared to 55% in the rest of the country (29% born outside Europe).	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek
Poland	2024	Count	1 night	The survey, via questionnaire, relies on national cross-sectoral collaboration of local authorities, police forces, reception centres, charities, and volunteers	31,042	3,083	Among the homeless population surveyed, 90% are Polish nationals (27,959 persons) and 6% are Ukrainian nationals (1,749 persons), while the remaining 4% declared other nationalities or no nationality.	Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej

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Portugal	2023	Count	1 night	The count – conducted at municipality level through a coordination of different support services – addresses rough sleepers and people living in temporary accommodation	13,128	3,019	Portuguese data include nationality and place of birth for rough sleepers and people living in temporary accommodation across all regions. Among 13,128 homeless persons: 77% Portuguese nationals, 23% foreign nationals (9% from Portuguese-speaking African countries). In terms of place of birth: 64% born in Portugal, 12% unknown origin, 14% born abroad (10% from Portuguese-speaking African countries). Significant variation by region: in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (AML), foreign nationals represent 41% (compared to 23% nationally), including 3% EU nationals, 17% from Portuguese-speaking African countries, and 21% from other countries. Foreign nationals are more prevalent in temporary accommodation (32%) than among rough sleepers (11%).	ENIPSSA
Romania	2022	Registration	1 year	The data results from a compilation of national estimates of the number of homeless households sourced from various existing administrative sources	1,893	NA	No migration breakdown	Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale
Slovakia	2023	Registration	1 year	The annual administrative statistics on the use of social services includes people accommodated in night shelters, hostels, and transitional housing	4,762	NA	No migration breakdown	Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny
Slovenia	2023	Registration	1 year	The figures, produced from the annual reports of social services providers, relate to homeless people in	2,218	NA	No migration breakdown	Inštitut Republike Slovenije za Socialno varstvo

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				supported accommodation				
Spain	2022	Count Extrapolation	6 weeks	The data collected is a representative sample of adults who frequent accommodation centres and soup kitchens in large cities	28,552	14,236	Among the 28,552 homeless persons counted in 2022, 50% are of foreign nationality (14,236 persons). Spanish statistics include indicators on migration-related characteristics through data on nationality, place of birth, and time of residence. Notably, 71% of homeless persons (20,207) have been living in Spain for more than 5 years, suggesting either a significant proportion of long-term residents among the homeless population, or a possible undercount of recently arrived refugees/migrants.	Instituto Nacional de Estadística
Sweden	2023	Count	1 week	The survey, conducted every six years, involves collecting data from organisations in contact with homeless adults or young people living without their parents	27,383	10,323	Among 27,383 homeless persons, 62% were born in Sweden and 38% abroad (10,323)	Socialstyrelsen
United Kingdom	2022	Registration Extrapolation	1 year	The data results from a compilation of national estimates of the number of homeless households sourced from various existing administrative sources	274,910	NA	No migration breakdown	Crisis

Source: National statistics on homelessness, for totals and details see Charbonnier & Coupechoux, 2025

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2.3.2 OECD Migration Data Brief

The OECD's publication, *Challenges to Measuring Homelessness Among Migrants in OECD and EU Countries* (Dumont et al., 2024) provides an additional overview of existing data and some key measurement challenges related to homelessness among migrants. According to the OECD, many countries do not report the share of migrants in national homelessness statistics (Dumont et al., 2024). Dumont et al. (2024) outline that in the EU and UK, homelessness statistics are only disaggregated by migrant status in Austria, Belgium, England, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia and Sweden (Dumont et al., 2024). Table 5 presents estimates of the proportion of migrants among people experiencing homelessness in OECD and EU countries. This shows clearly that countries use different definitions and categories when measuring homelessness; e.g., countries vary in whether they include asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented migrants, or foreign-born individuals in their homelessness counts. The use of different proxies (citizenship, country of birth, or residency status) and different geographical levels of measurement, also contributes to inconsistencies.

Regardless, the analysis by the OECD confirms that in most countries migrants are overrepresented in homelessness populations relative to their share in the general population. In Austria, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands, for example, it is estimated that migrants make up over a third of the homeless population. In Luxembourg, the percentage is even higher, with over 90% of beneficiaries of the Winter Action Programme not holding Luxembourgian citizenship. The UK data focuses on rough sleeping and shows that 27% of rough sleepers did not have UK citizenship, including 9% who were EU nationals.

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Table 5: Share of migrants among people experiencing homelessness in OECD and EU countries

Country	Share of migrants as % of total population[e]	Basis of migration determination in homeless-ness statistics	Share of migrants as % of total population experiencing homelessness[a]	Year	Source of homelessness data
Austria[b]	17.8%	Citizenship	Around 43% of people experiencing homelessness do not possess Austrian citizenship.	2020	Key figures on living conditions 2020
Belgium[c]	17.1% (Gent) 20% (Liège)	Citizenship	In Gent, 54% of people experiencing homelessness do not possess Belgian citizenship. In Liège, nearly 34% of people experiencing homelessness do not possess Belgian citizenship.	2021	Census of Homeless People
Canada	22%	Foreign place of birth	13% of people experiencing homelessness entered Canada as immigrants, refugees, or refugee claimants.	2022	Coordinated Point-in-Time Counts – "Everybody counts"
Colombia	3.8%	Foreign place of birth	16% of people experiencing homelessness were born outside Colombia.	2021	Census of Street Dwellers
Costa Rica	10.2%	Citizenship	Around 21% of people experiencing homelessness do not possess Costa Rican citizenship.	2019	Target Population Information System
Denmark	9.6%	Citizenship	22% of people experiencing homelessness do not possess Danish citizenship. Official data only include migrants with permanent residency. Data on homelessness among migrants without permanent residency are collected, but not reported.	2022	Mapping of Homelessness in Denmark
Finland	5.4%	Citizenship	24% of the homeless population "living alone" does not possess Finnish citizenship or does not have Finnish or Swedish as a mother tongue. Official data only include migrants who are included in the population register.	2023	Homelessness in Finland Report
Germany	14.2%	Citizenship	28% of people experiencing homelessness did not have German citizenship.	2022	Homelessness Reporting Act
Ireland	16%	Citizenship	Among people experiencing homelessness for whom information on citizenship is available (the non-response rate for this question was 53%), 35% do not possess Irish citizenship.	2022	Census of Population
Italy	8.5%	Citizenship	38% of people experiencing homelessness did not have Italian citizenship.	2021	Permanent Census of Population and Housing
Luxembo-urg	47.2%	Citizenship	Around 91% of the beneficiaries of the Winter Action Programme for the homeless did not have Luxembourgian citizenship. Of these, 47% of the beneficiaries	2023	Winter Action Program

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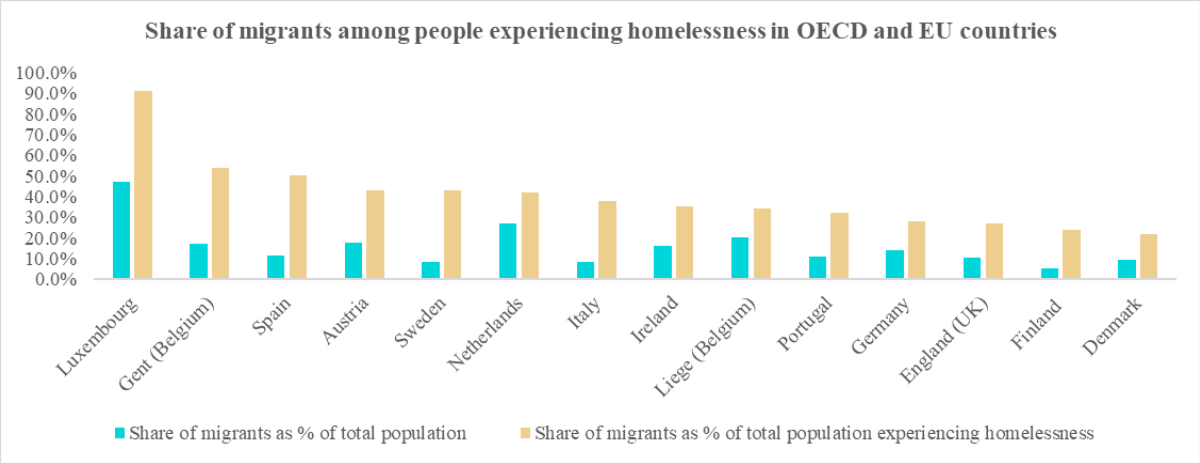
			were citizens of an EU country and around 44% were third-country citizens.		
Netherla-nds	27%	Foreign-born or native-born with foreign-born parentage	42% of people experiencing homelessness were born outside the Netherlands. Among these, 34% were born outside of Europe and 8% were born in another European country.	2023	Homeless in the Netherlands Study
Norway	10.8%	Citizenship	33% of people experiencing homelessness were born outside Norway. Of these, 4% were born in an EU country.	2020	Nationwide survey on homelessness
Portugal	10.7%	Foreign-born	Among people living rough (ETHOS 1), less than 10% do not possess the Portuguese citizenship in most regions (except in Algarve and Lisbon's metropolitan area, where 17% and 26% of people living rough do not possess Portuguese citizenship, respectively). Among people living in temporary accommodation, in all regions, 32% do not possess the Portuguese citizenship with the exception of Alentejo, where 55% do not possess Portuguese citizenship.	2022	Survey on the Characterization of People Experiencing Homelessness
Spain	11.4%	Citizenship	50% of individuals using accommodation assistance centres and restoration centres do not possess Spanish citizenship.	2022	Survey of the homeless people EPSH
Sweden	8.4%	Citizenship	43% of people experiencing homelessness were born outside Sweden.	2017	National mapping of homelessness
United Kingdom (England) d	10.6%	Citizenship	27% of people experiencing homelessness did not have UK citizenship. Out of these, 9% were EU nationals.	2023	Rough Sleeping Snapshot

Source: OECD (Dumont et al., 2024)

Figure 1 below illustrates the aforementioned data, noting that the use of divergent ETHOS categories across countries precludes exact comparisons. Nevertheless, in every jurisdiction for which data is available, the proportion of migrants within the homeless population (yellow bar) is substantially higher than their share of the general population (blue bar).

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Figure 1: Share of migrants in homeless population and in the general population



Source:: OECD (Dumont et al., 2024)

2.3.3 EU-SILC Housing Difficulties Module

EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) (*Eurostat*, n.d.) collects cross-sectional and longitudinal data across Europe on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions, and has also included specialised modules on past experience of housing difficulties (homelessness) among the general population. While the EU-SILC dataset has some substantial limitations, most notably the exclusion of current homelessness, and susceptibility to cultural bias (further details of which can be found in Deliverable 3.1, Chapter 8), it is nevertheless a useful data source on migration and homelessness.

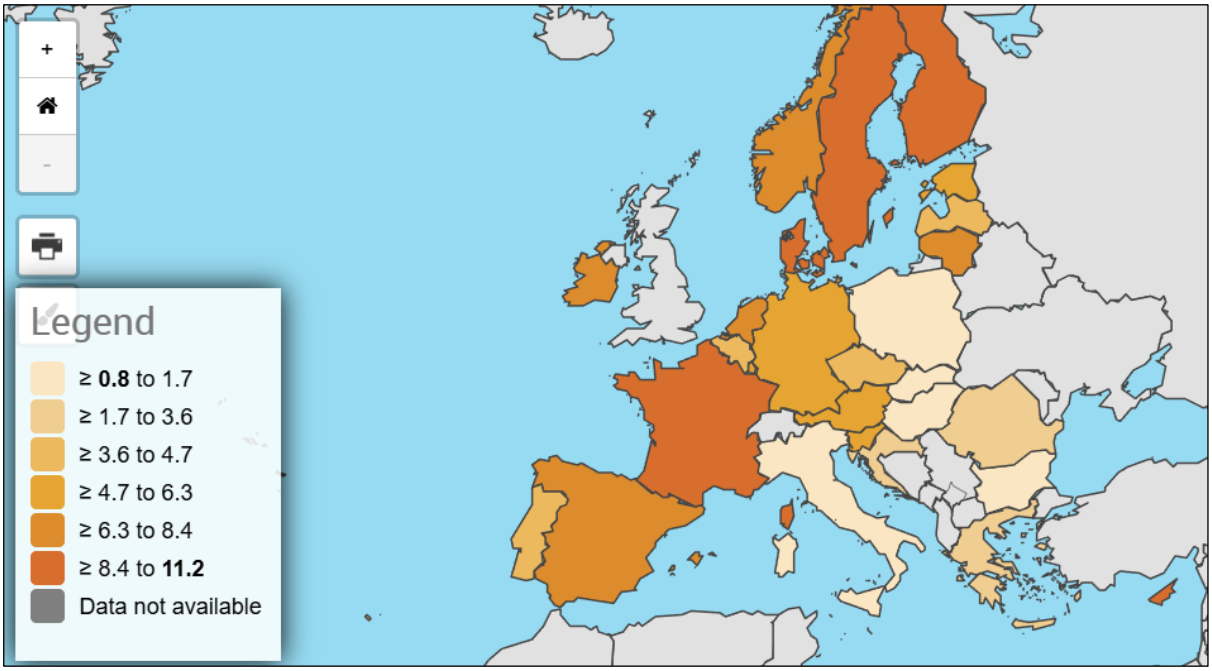
The analysis of migration-related data that follows below was also included in Deliverable 3.1, Chapter 8. It is repeated here given the focus of this report and as it provides an important context for the literature review and qualitative data chapters that follow.

Overall past experiences of homelessness

At some points in their lives 4.9% of the sampled population in the EU-SILC 2023 housing difficulties module reported experiencing homelessness corresponding to Ethos Light categories 1, 2-3, 5 and 6. Figure 2 below shows, for each country, the percentage of the overall population with lifetime experience of homelessness, with the darker colours corresponding to higher percentages.

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Figure 2: Percentage of population with lifetime experience of homelessness, 2023



Source: Eurostat (see here)

Migration background

Among the other variables considered, the 2023 housing difficulties module also asks about *country of birth* and *country of current citizenship*, though it is important to note that a portion of this data is indicated to be 'low reliability'. This further highlights the difficulties of comparable data collection in this area. In addition, as noted above, EU-SILC only captures a small part of homelessness: those *currently* homeless or staying in communal asylum seeker accommodation are excluded from the scope.

Table 6 below shows the rates of homelessness among EU and non-EU citizens. The available response options in the data set are grouped into EU27 countries, except reporting country; Non-EU27 country, nor reporting country; Foreign country; Reporting country. The overall highest rate of past homelessness is among individuals whose citizenship is non-EU and not the reporting country: 11.8% of this population has experienced housing difficulties in the past, in comparison with the 4.9% figure above. The second highest percentage, 11.3%, was

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among those whose country of birth was a non-EU 27 country nor the reporting country.

Table 6: Migration status and past experience of homelessness, EU averages, 2023

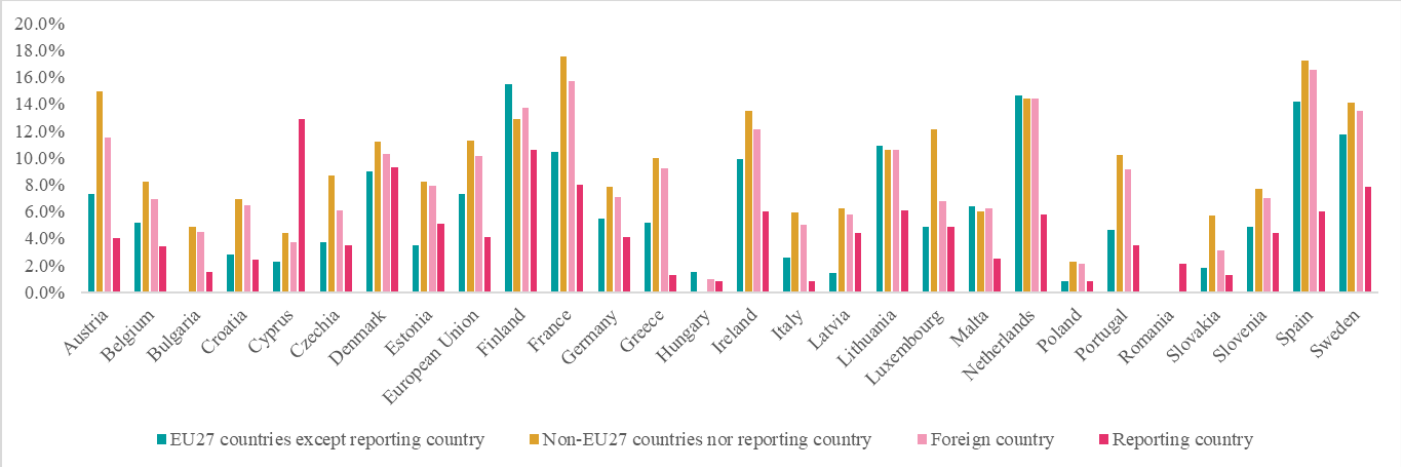
Country of birth		Country of citizenship	
EU27 countries, except reporting country	7.3%	EU27 countries, except reporting country	7.4%
Non-EU27 country, nor reporting country	11.3%	Non-EU27 country, nor reporting country	11.8%
Foreign country	10.1%	Foreign country	10.2%
Reporting country	4.1%	Reporting country	4.4%

Source: Eurostat (See here and here)

Country of birth

Averaging across the EU, the highest rate of past homelessness is among those born not in an EU27 country and not the reporting country (11.3%). In contrast, the lowest rate (4.1%) is among native-born individuals in the country in which they answered the survey. Considering the data at individual country level, we see the same trends play out. With one exception, Cyprus, native-born individuals are consistently less likely to report past homelessness than those born in a foreign country. These differences are particularly stark in some countries, e.g., Austria, Greece, Netherlands, or Spain, as Figure 3 below shows.

Figure 3: Past experience of homelessness by group of country of birth, 2023

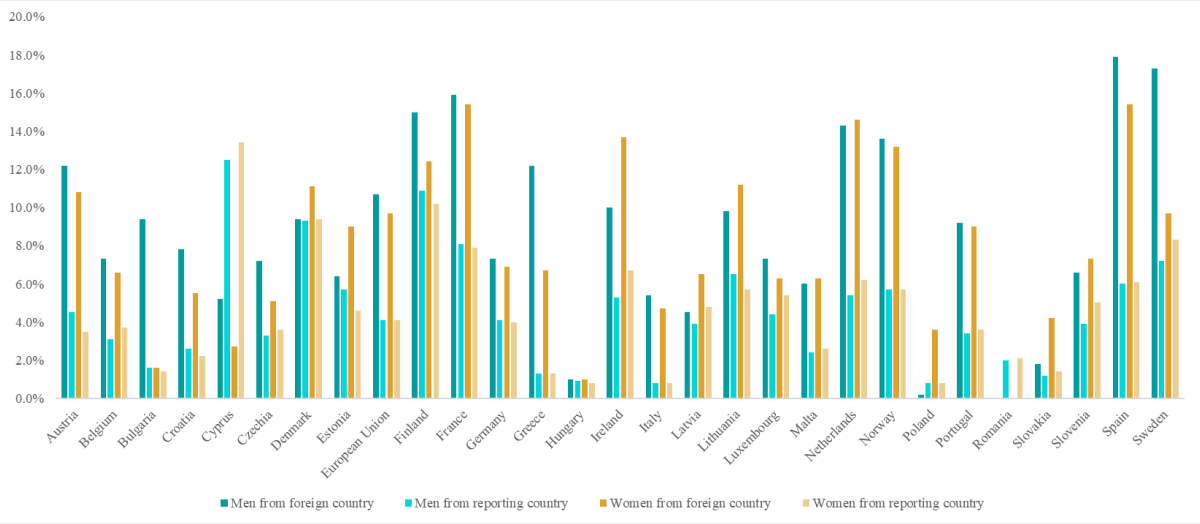


Source: Eurostat (See here)

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Figure 4, below, shows past experience of homelessness by group of country of birth, but also broken down for men and women. Generally we see the above trends continue, foreign-born men or foreign-born women are more likely to have experienced homelessness than their native counterparts, but we also see some significant differences. For example, in Bulgaria and Sweden, foreign-born men are much more likely to experience homelessness than any other group. Foreign-born women are the most likely to have experienced homelessness in Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia.

Figure 4: Past experience of homelessness by group of country of birth and gender, 2023



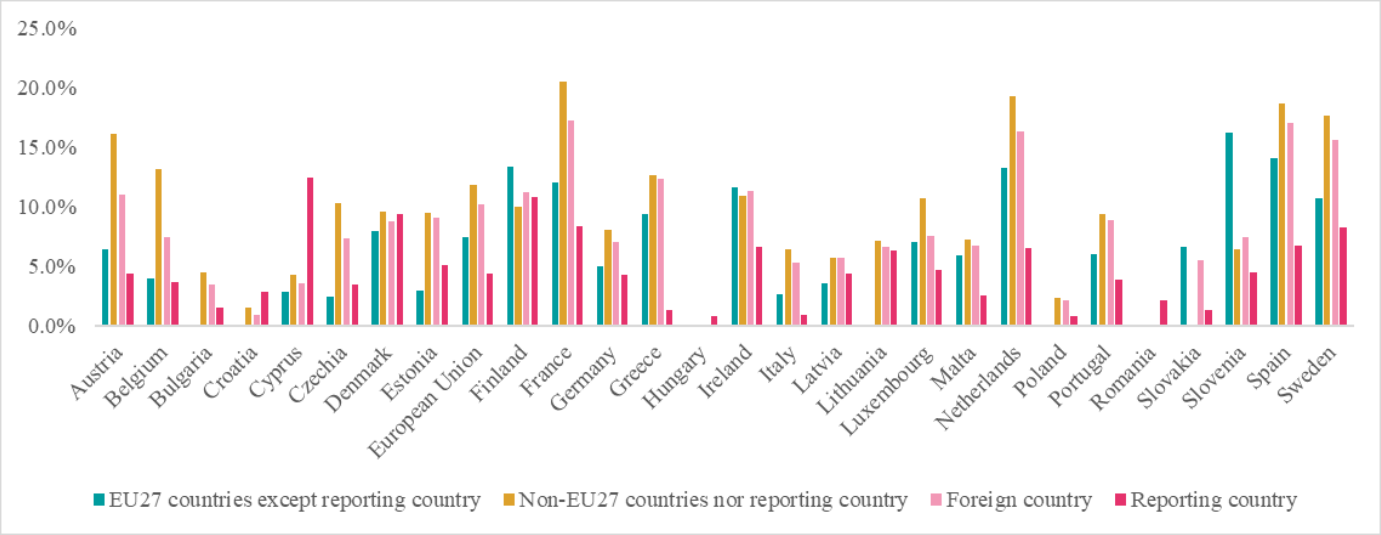
Source: Eurostat (see here)

Country of citizenship

The current country of citizenship was also included in the EU-SILC dataset. Looking at the EU average, the highest rate of past homelessness is among those with citizenship from a non-EU27 country and not the reporting country (11.8%), as we observe in Figure 5, below. In contrast, the lowest rate is among those with local country citizenship (4.4%). When considering individual countries, we see similar trends as with the country of birth: in most places those with citizenship of the reporting country have the lowest homelessness rates, with Cyprus, again, as the exception. The dataset does not specify, however, when, and whether this past homelessness occurred inside of outside of the reporting country.

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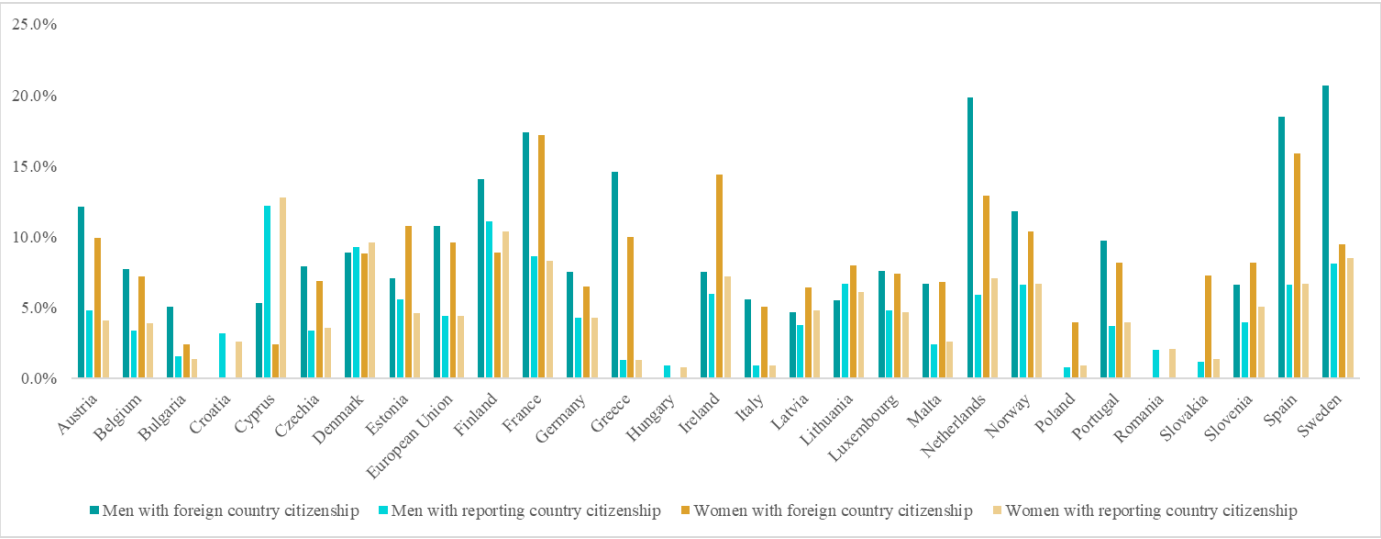
Figure 5: Past experience of homelessness by group of current country of citizenship, 2023



Source: Eurostat (see here)

We see the above trends continue when broken down by gender, as well, as Figure 6, below, shows. Men with foreign country citizenship are particularly vulnerable to homelessness in the Netherlands and Sweden, while in Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania, women with foreign country citizenship are the group most likely to have experienced homelessness in the past. Women with Cypriot citizenship are the most likely to have experienced past homelessness in Cyprus.

Figure 6: Past experience of homelessness by group of current country of citizenship and gender, 2023



Source: Eurostat (see here)

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The EU-SILC past experience of housing difficulties module clearly illustrates, also, that individuals born outside of the EU and outside of the country where they are answering the survey, or with citizenship of a foreign and non-EU country are consistently more likely to have experienced past homelessness in most countries. Furthermore, disaggregating the data by migrant status remains a significant challenge in this context also. As EU-SILC is a household survey, undocumented individuals and those staying in collective accommodation are excluded.

2.3.4 European Homelessness Count

The European Homelessness Count project, led by KU Leuven, aims to address homelessness in Europe by developing a uniform methodology and framework for homelessness counts in cities (Hermans et al., 2025). The project developed a data collection approach and tested it across 15 European cities, shown in Figure 7, below. The aim was to provide more analogous, consistent European homelessness data, and surpass some of the key challenges with data comparability. The following section uses data from the first round of counts, published at the end of the first year of the project. Data is available for more cities in the final report, which is forthcoming.

Figure 7: Cities in the European Homelessness Count, 2024



Source: Hermans et al. (2025)

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Within the count, data on homelessness and migration background was collected, by way of citizenship as the key proxy for migration. Table 7 below details the results of each city broken down by whether the individuals are nationals, EU-citizens, or non-EU citizens. The proportions vary significantly across cities, indicating "widely varying associations between migration and homelessness" (Hermans et al., 2025, p. 51).

The results are to be interpreted with caution, as the above discussed data collection challenges appear in this study, as well. The study employed several variations of the Point-in-Time (PIT) count. However, this method has notable limitations, such as an increased likelihood of over-representing individuals with long-term homelessness and complex needs (Hermans et al., 2025). Cities were able to choose from three different data collection types: (1) Basic Count (headcounts and administrative data), (2) Elaborate Count (survey-based data collection) and (3) Comprehensive count (extended service-based approach) (Hermans et al., 2025). The different cities collected data on different ETHOS Light categories.

The variables also differed in cities, e.g. in Italy additional variables were used such as whether the person has legal residence in the country. At the same time, in several cities (e.g., Catania, Dublin, Cork), many migrants were excluded from the data as services for asylum seekers or refugees are often hosted in separate dedicated services and thus not considered homeless. In Münster on the other hand, a service for migrants was also included. In the Netherlands, the cities of Nijmegen and West-Friesland placed extra focus on identifying undocumented migrants

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Table 7: Nationality of the homeless population

	National		EU-citizen		Non EU-citizen	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
BOCHUM	221	21.3	21	2.0	788	75.9
BUDAPEST	3439	98.7	28	0.8	<10	
CATANIA	15	27.8	<10		36	66.7
CHARLEROI	453	78.3	25	4.3	101	17.4
CORK	323	59.4	81	14.9	140	25.7
DUBLIN	3476	45.7	1797	23.6	2337	30.7
KOŠICE	507	97.5	13 (other nationality)	2,5 (other nationality)	-	-
LJUBLJANA	171	77.7	14	6.4	34	15.5
LYON	1231	22.6	693	12.7	3527	64.7
MILAN	60	24.0	25	10.0	165	66.0
MÜNSTER	557	36.3	212	13.8	762	49.7
NAMUR	334	73.6	12	2.6	108	23.8
NIJMEGEN	146	62.4	28	12.0	54	23.1
PORTO	386	86.9	<10		52	11.7
WEST-FRIESLAND	106	77.9	11	8.1	19	14.0

Source: Hermans et al. (2025)

Table 7 shows that in four cities, Bochum, Catania, Lyon, and Milan, over half of the homeless population counted as non-EU citizens. In the Bochum and Munster shelters specifically, most of the users do not possess German citizenship. Around 75% of all persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) in Bochum are non-EU citizens, including Syrians as the largest group (26.4%). In Münster, 50% of PEH were non-EU citizens, with most (62.5%) coming from Ukraine. In Catania, *despite* migrant specific housing services being excluded, 70% of PEH in the service-based counts were nevertheless coming from outside of the EU. In Dublin, 15% of all homelessness was triggered by exits from institutions, mainly specific accommodation centres for international protection applicants. In Milan, 66% of the surveyed population were non-EU citizens, and of the non-Italians 35.5% were undocumented residents. In Nijmegen 23% of counted individuals were non-EU citizens and 12% EU citizens, but not Dutch. In West-Friesland these numbers were 14% and 8% respectively. In contrast, in Budapest and Kosice, nearly all counted homeless individuals are nationals, highlighting that migration flows impact homelessness differently in different countries.

Six cities out of the 15 in the count (Bochum, Catania, Dublin, Lyon, Milan and Nijmegen) stated that migration and migration policies are a top five factor

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influencing the level of homelessness (Hermans et al., 2025). In Lyon and Milan, migration is the second most common trigger indicated.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the available quantitative evidence on the scale of homelessness among refugees and migrants, drawing on a variety of data sources. Three key overall themes emerge from this data.

Firstly, the available data is fragmented and difficult to compare. Different definitions, different proxy measures and generally incomplete data make it challenging to fully understand the scale of homelessness among refugees and migrants across the EU and UK.

Second, refugees and migrants appear overrepresented in homelessness numbers, where they are counted, relative to their size in the overall population. The situation varies considerably across countries, depending on the local policy, service and migration context. The European Homelessness Counts show high concentrations of non-EU nationals sleeping rough in 15 European cities. The OECD data show that in every country considered, migrants make up a larger share of the homeless population than their percentages in the general population. Finally, EU-SILC analysis shows higher lifetime experiences of homelessness among those born outside the EU or having non-EU citizenship.

Thirdly, in total numbers, European nationals still experience homelessness more frequently than non-EU migrants. As the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH) (2025, p. 4) also note in their research on non-EU migrant homelessness "most European homelessness is experienced by Europeans". Non-EU migrants may be at an elevated risk, but with a few exceptions, do not make up the majority of homeless individuals in Europe.

To conclude, the analysis of data here lends evidence to the assertion that "vulnerable migrants, such as refugees, are particularly susceptible to housing stress, housing insecurity and, ultimately, even to homelessness, in their new life in their destination countries" (Brown et al., 2024, p. 231). In the following chapters we explore why this is the case, firstly by examining the literature and then by presenting new qualitative data.

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Chapter 3: Review of Literature in Relation to Patterns of Homelessness Among Migrants and Refugees

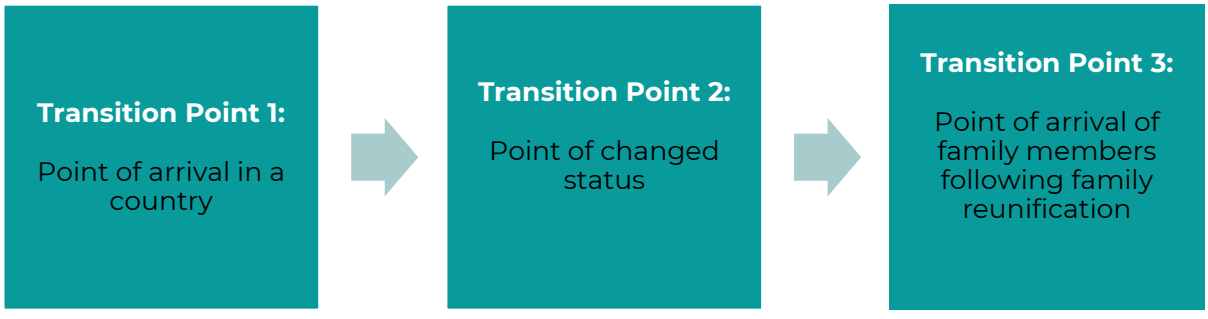
3.1 Introduction

Having examined available statistical data on migrant homelessness in order to establish the extent of homelessness among refugees and migrants - as per Objective 1 of Work Package 7 - this chapter now builds on that evidence to try to develop a better understanding of the reasons why people of migrant background are over represented in situations of homelessness. Here we examine the existing academic and grey literature. The chapter begins by introducing three transition points at which refugees and migrants are likely to be at increased risk of homelessness and housing precarity, before then outlining briefly the approach adopted in reviewing the literature. The literature is then discussed in relation to each transition point. Overall, by compiling diverse forms of literature on the topic of homelessness and migrants using a transition points framework, this chapter provides in-depth insight into when and why refugees and migrants appear to be at particular risk of homelessness.

3.2 Review of Literature at Three Transition Points: Approach

The review of literature presented in this chapter is structured around a framework of migrant transition points, a framework developed for this study. We identify three transition points at which refugees and migrants are likely to be at increased risk of homelessness and housing precarity. These transition points are: (1) the point of arrival in a country; (2) the point of changed status; and (3) the point of arrival of family members through family reunification.

Figure 8: Migration Transition Points Framework



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The literature review employed a scoping approach to map the key themes and evidence concerning these transition points. Through Google Scholar searches and organisational websites known for producing relevant reports (e.g., EU agencies, NGOs, international organisations, research institutes), we identified a broad range of academic publications, policy documents, and grey literature relevant to the topic. Our initial search terms included keywords such as *"migrant homelessness," "refugee homelessness," "transition points," "trigger points," "asylum reception," "housing pathways", and "family reunification"*. As we identified relevant themes and our knowledge of the literature increased, more specific searches were conducted to identify relevant content. We considered sources relevant if they addressed the following aspects: homelessness among migrants, refugees, or international protection applicants/asylum seekers; factors shaping housing exclusion for migrants and refugees; one or more of the three transition points identified in the project. We included only publications focused on EU member states and the UK and organised the discussion of the literature along the three transition periods and the key emerging themes within each transition. Reflecting the language skills of the research team, our search was primarily limited to English language publications, though a small number of Greek language publications were also included. We recognise this as a limitation.

It is important to note that despite distinguishing between distinct transition points, there are overlaps across them as regards the causes and expressions of housing precarity. For instance, as our data and existing literature confirm, discrimination pertains to all stages, and so does the lack of housing stock. In our discussion of the literature that follows, subthemes under each transition point are discussed in relation to that particular point, but with recognition that this overlap exists.

3.3 Transition Point 1: Homelessness at the Point of arrival

The first transition point is the point of initial arrival in a new country. Here, the literature suggests several reasons why people are at an increased risk of homelessness upon initial arrival: 1) restrictive access to *welfare and housing support*; 2) *lack of access to or delay in accessing material reception conditions*,

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and 3) *failures in providing adequate material reception conditions*. Each of these is discussed in turn.

3.3.1 Restrictive access to welfare and housing support

Newly arrived migrants are likely to **lack social networks and knowledge of the housing system**, both of which are often key to securing housing where it is in short supply (EOH 2025; Byrne 2025; Andersson 2020). This will likely make it more difficult to find a home. Indeed, Lima (2025) contends that: "the process of finding housing in a new country can be culturally overwhelming and confusing" and adds that "learning about the local housing system and norms can be a steep learning curve for new arrivals" (p. 40). Where access to housing is challenging, state welfare and housing policies are often needed to assist. However, **the provisions that are generally available to citizens may not be accessible to newly arrived migrants**.

In many countries in Europe, new migrants **do not have an entitlement to access housing supports or homeless services** (Lima 2025; EOH 2025). EU migrants usually have to navigate a complex set of laws that is different across each country, and which is further differentiated according to the length of overall stay in the country, and work status, among others. The fundamental EU principle of free movement is not experienced equally by all EU citizens due to the conditionality of accessible housing (Nies et al., 2026). Support in the event of homelessness may comprise day centres and night shelters - the latter being characterised by somewhat increased flexibility (ibid). In cases of family reunification, depending on the nationality of each partner (EU/non-EU) and the relevant regulations in place that intertwine residence with housing access, research across European countries has shown an exacerbation of power asymmetries between individuals, if not significant hurdles to accessing the right altogether (Belloni and Cleton, 2025; Groenendijsk, 2025; Della Puppa, 2025; Belloni and Verschraegen, 2025; Corradi and Desmet, 2025; Orsini and Merla, 2025).

Research highlights that governance regimes tend to be limited, 'patchy', or a constantly shifting system of rules and restrictions applied unevenly, hard to navigate, resulting in exacerbating migrants' vulnerability, and failing to provide long-lasting solutions (Etzold, et al., 2022). Migrants with an **irregular status**

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encounter particular difficulties accessing assistance while their irregular status exacerbates their precarity against exploitative landlords as well (Mylona et al., 2025). In 2025, based on its survey of 16 EU countries plus the UK, the European Observatory on Homelessness reported "**little or no provision for people classified as irregular migrants experiencing homelessness**" (p. 9). In the Italian context, Giansanti et al. (2022) note that access to publicly funded shelters and homeless services may be conditional upon individuals being "registered as having the legal right to reside in the country" (p. 594). Others may opt to remain outside of official systems that might otherwise be able to provide support. For example, evidence from Greece suggests that some unaccompanied minors choose to remain outside the official international protection reception system, as they intend to move on to other jurisdictions (Lønning, 2024). Such decisions, often informed by **restrictive migration policies** – for instance, the requirement to seek protection in the first country in which someone arrives (explained in Chapter 1 and discussed further below) – place people at risk of homelessness. Regarding unaccompanied minors in Greece, there have also been reports on misregistration of unaccompanied minors as adults, resulting in them being housed with unrelated adults, in which instance housing exacerbates their vulnerability, while not providing care for their particular needs (HRW, 2017). In addition, migrants who do not have permission to be in the state may be **fearful of accessing homeless services** in case their undocumented status is flagged on state systems (Delbos et al., 2025). They therefore are at **risk of destitution**. Those who do apply for international protection but who wish to obtain housing outside of the reception system may be excluded from general homelessness services and welfare benefits because they are expected to be supported by a separate international protection reception system, which may itself be inadequate (EOH, 2016; Serme-Morin & Lamas, 2020). In a survey conducted with experts in 12 EU member states, the European Observatory on Homelessness (2016) found that in most countries surveyed the existence of separate reception systems is the main reason why potential asylum seekers typically do not use general homelessness services before applying for asylum (EOH, 2016).

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3.3.2 Lack of access to or delay in accessing material reception conditions

As was outlined in Chapter 1, according to the Reception Conditions Directive, EU governments have a legal obligation to ensure international protection applicants have access to reception conditions, including housing, which provide an adequate standard of living for applicants. However, **countries do not always adhere to this obligation with asylum seekers then forced into homelessness** in numerous countries (FRA, 2026). Often states indicate that this is due to their systems being at or beyond capacity, although the Court of Justice of the EU has ruled that "Member States cannot invoke sudden rises in asylum applications or accommodation shortages to evade their obligations to provide minimum reception conditions like shelter, food, and water" (FRA, 2026, p. 27). A failure to provide accommodation to new arrivals was reported by the European Observatory of Homelessness in 2016 in relation to countries such as Greece, Sweden, Hungary and Italy (2016) and more recently, in 2026, in relation to Ireland, Belgium, and Greece (EOH, 2025). Other reports suggest similar issues exist in countries such as France (Delbos et al., 2025), Italy (Bove et al., 2025), and Spain (Melilla) (DdP, 2026) where authorities have failed to accommodate some new arrivals. In many contexts, these failures result in the creation of makeshift camps where asylum seekers live in extremely poor conditions (Bove et al., 2025; Paidakaki et al., 2021). **Exclusion from reception arrangements** can be grouped broadly into those who are excluded from reception conditions due to being deemed 'not vulnerable' and those excluded due to Dublin regulations[5], both of which are discussed below. However, it is important to note that even outside of these categories sometimes there are **delays in accessing reception conditions**, resulting in homelessness among other groups, including families and unaccompanied children (Barbu & Pérez Barranco, 2025; Amnesty International, 2025). Recent research in Greece underscores the precarious situation of unaccompanied minors who are forced into street homelessness when reception and identification centres reach capacity (Kourachanis, 2021). Despite the concentrated efforts to prioritise provision for unaccompanied minors, that

[5] The Dublin Regulations are explained in Chapter 1

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included the launch of a National Emergency Responsive Mechanism (NERM), and the end of mandatory custody that has been heavily criticised as constituting a violation of human rights (Mentzelopoulou, 2022), children and unaccompanied minors continue to face housing precarity, and housing conditions that do not meet adequate criteria for decent living or the particular needs of their age, while transitions, such as reaching adulthood, may exacerbate their situation (Oikonomou et al., 2022; Chouzouraki & Dewulf, 2024).

Regarding **exclusion due to being considered 'non vulnerable'**, the literature pertaining to both Ireland and Belgium highlights that in particular 'single' men (or men who arrive without dependent family members) are often excluded from accommodation upon arrival, with governments instead prioritising applicants who are considered to be 'vulnerable', in the context of a shortage of reception accommodation. It is important to acknowledged that defining and determining vulnerability is highly complex and contested. Regarding international protection applicants, decisions by state authorities about who is and is not vulnerable are likely to be shaped by a range of factors, definitions of "vulnerable persons" under the Reception Conditions Directive, where particular cohorts (for example, children, victims of trafficking, disabled people) are recognised as vulnerable. Of course, such recognition does not mean that reception conditions obligations do not apply to other groups.[6]

In the Irish context, in February 2023, the Irish state indicated that it had run out of accommodation for international protection applicants, leading to the prioritisation of women or men arriving within family groups. As a result, 'single' men became subjected to street homelessness as a matter of policy, sometimes for protracted periods, sometimes for a few days (Ní Raghallaigh, 2026). In Belgium, the government has been sued over 12,000 times for failing to provide reception conditions to applicants (Amnesty International, 2025). In 2025 research by Amnesty International, the organisation criticised the fact that since Autumn 2023, Belgium halted reception for single male asylum seekers. The organisation pointed to the fact that the Belgian authorities are "narrowing the concept of vulnerability

[6] For a discussion of vulnerability and its complexities under the new Pact, see here.

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to exclude people who are not considered 'vulnerable enough' " and pointed to the "arbitrary" application of the vulnerability criteria (Amnesty International, 2025, p. 9). As a result, at the end of 2024, 3,000 individual men were on waiting lists for a reception place, with a 3-4 month waiting time (Fedasil, 2025). These individuals struggle to find alternative housing, and are homeless and resort to living in squats, rough sleeping, or living in informal tent settlements. The manner in which 'vulnerability' is assessed within these contexts has been the subject of significant criticism (Amnesty International, 2025; Flamand et al., 2023) with Ní Raghallaigh (2026) arguing that current policies rendering single men homeless are likely to 'vulnerabilise' this cohort, even if they are not considered vulnerable initially. Indeed, research by the Irish Refugee Council points to the risk of homeless international protection applicants being subjected to assaults and harassment in Ireland (Irish Refugee Council, 2023), something that is likely to be the case elsewhere also, given the rise of anti-refugee sentiment throughout Europe.

While unaccompanied minors are not generally included among the so-called 'non vulnerable' populations who may be left unaccommodated by countries such as Ireland and Belgium, the European Observatory on Homelessness (2025) draws attention to **the issue of age assessment**, where the age of a young person is disputed, resulting in delays in accessing child protection services or exclusion from these services. It is widely recognised that age assessments are highly complex and often contentious processes, the outcomes of which have significant implications for the young people involved (Bialas, 2025; Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2025). Notwithstanding the complex debates at play, which this report cannot address in detail, one concern expressed by authorities is that children will be at risk if international protection applicants are wrongly identified as being under 18 and placed in children's accommodation. There is less recognition of the fact that risks are also at play – perhaps even greater risks - when children are wrongly assessed to be adults and placed in adult settings (Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2025). While the importance of appropriate and sufficient age assessment mechanisms are often emphasised (e.g. Council of Europe, 2019), there have also been calls for the abolition of age assessments (e.g. Rosen and Khan, 2024), thus pointing to the very contested nature of this topic

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Notwithstanding these complex debates, there is some evidence of homelessness among age-disputed young people. In the Irish context, the Irish Refugee Council (2023) notes that male unaccompanied minors can be subjected to street homelessness due to the state's decision not to accommodate 'single' men upon arrival combined with an age assessment process that may classify the young people as adults. Similarly, in Greece, reports documented that unaccompanied minors were wrongly identified as being over the age of 18 and were therefore accommodated with unrelated adults, thus being exposed to additional risks, and excluded from receiving care and support appropriate to their age (HRW, 2017; StC and GCR, 2026).

Outright exclusion from reception also happens as a result of the Dublin Regulation. As explained in Chapter 1, according to the Dublin Regulation, international protection applicants are expected to register in the first country in the EU and remain there until a decision is reached on their protection claim, as the EU aims to limit secondary movement. Research suggests that protection seekers share information amongst each other regarding better or worse reception conditions, leading individuals to either avoid registering in initial countries, or to move on as soon as possible (Westendorp, 2022). Research by Giansanti et al. (2022), referring to the Italian and Swedish contexts, suggests that that onward movement occurs as people try to escape harsh conditions. As noted above, evidence from Greece and Norway indicates that unaccompanied minors interviewed by Lønning (2024) remained outside the formal Greek systems as they sought to move on to other destinations. Individuals subject to the Dublin Regulation may not be able to access shelter in a new country, but are also often not returned to their first country of entry, leading again to rough sleeping, homeless shelter use or living in makeshift encampments (Holman, 2019). Barbu & Pérez Barranco (2025) discuss minors in transit in Belgium, who have limited access to shelter as they do not wish to register with the authorities. The authors report that they become dependent on informal networks and are at risk of exploitation (ibid).

Drawing on the work of Belloni (2016) and Elsrud (2020), both of whom discuss 're-escapes' to new EU countries and how individuals were not deterred by

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restrictive migration practices, Giansanti (2020) states the following: "For many, having already risked so much, restrictive migration practices were not perceived as insurmountable barriers but rather as another obstacle, another challenge on the unforgiving road to survival" (Giansanti, 2020, p. 41). This is consistent with Amnesty International's (2025) research in relation to Belgium. Asylum seekers are often cognizant of the systemic failures in reception; they recognize that, without family support, homelessness is nearly inevitable. Nevertheless, they proceed with this choice due to a lack of viable alternatives: "When I came, I knew about the situation in Belgium from other people… If you don't have family, you will end up living in the street… [You have to] depend on [yourself] and survive for 5-8 months. But it was my only option. I cannot be back in Gaza" (research participant cited by Amnesty International, 2025, p. 26).

3.3.3 Failures in providing adequate material reception conditions

Being entirely excluded from asylum seeker housing, as described above, is a clear violation of EU law. However, even when housing is provided, there are large differences across countries in what constitutes '*adequate shelter*' (Westendorp, 2022). Ten years ago the European Observatory on Homelessness (2016) reported that **due to a lack of capacity within reception centres**, asylum seekers were accommodated in transit or emergency facilities; although designed to be temporary, these settings became "**institutionalised as part of the reception system**" (p. 24). To this day, such facilities continue to meet the criteria for homelessness as defined by the ETHOS Light categories. Reception conditions are very inconsistent across countries, with Westendorp (2022, p. 330) describing some as of "a high standard" whereas in others "the living conditions are neither humane nor dignified". The large and controversial reception centres used in hotspots in Italy and Greece are often unsafe, unsanitary, crowded and with limited access by external independent monitoring bodies poses great concerns for respect of fundamental rights in these facilities (Amnesty International 2016; Radjenovic, 2023; ECRE, 2016). While countries on the European border often deal with greater numbers of international protection applicants and hence are likely to have greater difficulty providing reception settings of a higher standard, in other parts of Europe problems are also evident. For example, recent studies in Ireland highlight a shift

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toward emergency centres, which have overtaken registered accommodation as the primary accommodation source for international protection applicants (Smyth et al., 2026). Such centres differ from one another in a number of respects. For example, Smyth et al. (2026) note that emergency centres lack independent oversight, unlike the registered centres. Amongst multiple problems with these emergency settings, the research pointed to issues regarding a lack of privacy and autonomy and people's human dignity and wellbeing being undermined by lengthy stays in settings that were not suitable. It should be noted also that, similar to many other countries, in Ireland much of refugee accommodation provision is privatised, meaning there are large profits to be gained from housing refugees, with little incentive to increase standards particularly when the centres in question are not regulated and when governments do not have sufficient supply. Similarly, Giansanti et al. (2022) refer to accommodation for international protection applicants in Italy and Sweden as amounting to "only precarious housing, as it is temporary, conditional, and often uncertain" (p. 590).

In Greece, significant concern has been raised in relation to the accommodation provided to some unaccompanied minors, with evidence of shelter not being provided, as well as reception conditions that are viewed as substandard (ECSR, 2021; Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025). Drawing on his research with stakeholders in Greece, Kourachanis (2021) refers to the "informal normalization of emergency services as a long-term housing solution" (p. 594) for unaccompanied minors, which include 'safe zones' within adult centres. Kourachanis (2021) highlights the "social inadequacy" of these structures and contends that often even basic human rights are not met. While the Irish and Greek contexts regarding unaccompanied minors are very different, arising partly from their different geographic locations, it is interesting to note that in Ireland too 'emergency' accommodation arrangements have been put in place for separated children in recent years, resulting in children being placed in facilitates that are not subject to independent inspection and which are staffed by less experienced staff (Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2025).

Research has also shown that reception centres in Greece can frequently result in exposure to violence, rather than serving as an effective shelter from it,

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exacerbating their residents' vulnerability in conjunction with their marginalised positionality (Kyratsou, 2026; Kyratsou, 2025; Kyratsou & Murphy, 2025; Marshall & Kyratsou, 2020). In Greece, **restrictive asylum policies**, in conjunction with the inadequacies in material reception conditions, have pushed refugees and asylum seekers to provide for their own housing, navigating exclusionary regimes in ways that signify radical exercises of their agency (Papatzani et al., 2022; Tsavdaroglou and Kaika, 2022; Tsavdaroglou and Lalenis, 2020; Tsavdaroglou et al., 2019; Tsavdaroglou, 2024; Tsavdaroglou et al., 2026).

While conditions in reception centres in many European countries have been criticised for their poor quality and marginalised locations (Brown et al., 2024; Kreichauf, 2018; O'Reilly, 2018; Walther et al., 2020), the situation in Greece warrants particular attention. Amnesty International (2024a; 2024b) paints a grim picture of the Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs), characterizing them as a "dystopian nightmare" (Amnesty International, 2024b, n.p.) that fails to meet basic human rights standards. Despite receiving hundreds of millions of euro in EU funding, these facilities are described as prison-like structures defined by high-tech surveillance and "de facto" detention. The CCACs and mainland camps in Greece have transitioned from humanitarian hubs into heavily securitized sites of arbitrary, de facto administrative detention, where mandatory "restriction of freedom" orders routinely exceed legal time limits (Amnesty International, 2024a). In extreme instances, such as the remote Sintiki camp, hundreds of asylum seekers are held in total isolation for up to nine months, subjected to harsh disciplinary police measures and cut off from outside communication (Efsyn, 2026). This is compounded by what appears to be deliberate geographic segregation, as camps are built several kilometres away from towns without public transit with the International Rescue Committee (2022) describing this as an attempt to keep residents "out of sight and out of mind" (n.p.). Concurrently, human rights organizations warn that this punitive Greek pilot system is being used as a dangerous blueprint to institutionalize detention, surveillance, and deterrence over dignity across the continent under the new EU Migration Pact (Amnesty International, 2024; van Brunnersum, 2023).

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The literature suggests that on the ground, camp residents endure an infrastructure collapse defined by **severe overcrowding** – with facilities like Kos and Samos operating at nearly double their capacities – forcing people to sleep on floors without consistent electricity (Bazán López, 2026; Amnesty International, 2024a; Wallis, 2024). Running water is frequently restricted to between two and four hours a day, causing widespread outbreaks of lice, scabies, and skin conditions (Wallis, 2024). This physical decline is worsened by a critical shortage of permanent medical personnel and medical supplies (MSF, 2022). Security protocols including biometric gates and 24/7 surveillance have resulted in Bazán López (2026) describing them as being "defined by an oppressive and mentally devastating environment" (n.p.). The International Rescue Committee (IRC) (2022) report that 41% of those supported by the IRC mental health programme in Samos showed "symptoms of suicidality" (n.p.). Finally, it has been noted that the camps lack safe spaces for vulnerable groups; unaccompanied children, whose numbers quadrupled in 2024, are routinely housed alongside unrelated adult men, and LGBTQI+ community face targeted harassment and a lack of safe housing (Bazán López, 2026; Amnesty International, 2024a; ECRE, 2024).

3.4 Transition Point 2: Homelessness at the Point of Changed Status

The literature points to later-stage points of transition that exacerbate the risk of homelessness and housing precarity: these transition points often relate to a changed 'status' for the person, either a change in their migration status or a change in their status from being a child to being an adult, the latter being particularly relevant in the case of unaccompanied minors/separated children. While other changes of circumstances or crises may also be triggers for homelessness (for example, becoming unemployed; becoming ill), our focus here will be on migration and age-related status changes. It is worth noting too that these two status changes can intersect – for example, when an unaccompanied minor receives their international protection outcome at the point of becoming an adult.

Regarding a **changed migration status**, for migrants this may arise where their visa expires, for example. For people who go through the international protection process - which will be our primary focus in this section - this is the point where

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they have either received a negative outcome in their application for protection or where they have been granted protection in one of its different forms. Based on a review of literature, Brown et al (2024) highlight "the transition from asylum seeker to refugee status" as "one of the key areas of housing stress for refugees" (p. 255). Often this transition point results in the ending of institutional support, with people expected to leave the accommodation that was provided under reception obligations (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2025; Riemer et al., 2025; Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025). At this transition point, people experience many challenges and are at risk of homelessness (Brown et al., 2024). Indeed, referring to the "many difficulties and challenges" faced by refugees as they transition from collective accommodation to rental accommodation, Allsopp et al., (2024, p. 100) argue that "access to either the rental market and to social or affordable housing is shown to be complex and challenging, and often impossible". In recent research on this topic Magnúsdóttir & Barbu (2026, p. 4) stated that "homelessness among recognised refugees is increasingly reported across Europe, taking the form of rough sleeping, reliance on temporary or emergency accommodation, overcrowded, unsafe housing, and imminent risks of eviction or institutional exits without housing alternatives". In France, for example, many recognised beneficiaries overstay in reception centres or leave the system with no accommodation, eventually joining one of the informal camps. According to the estimates of Forum Réfugiés–Cosi, around 15%-20% of camp inhabitants are beneficiaries of international protection (EUAA, n.d.).

Another change of status is the **change from being a child to that of being an adult**, which has particular implications for unaccompanied minors and can place them at increased risk of homelessness. International literature points to the significant challenges faced by the general 'careleaver' population: young people who have spent time in state care and who then transition from that system to 'adulthood' often losing many supports in the process (e.g. Gupta, 2019; Van der Stighelen, et al., 2025). Among these challenges is the significant risk of homelessness and housing precarity (Glynn & Mayock, 2023; Palmer, et al., 2022), with evidence suggesting that care experienced young people are more likely to experience homelessness than their peers without care experience (Gypen et al.,

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2017). The intersection of the care and international protection systems is most pronounced in the case of unaccompanied minors, many of whom seek international protection and are cared for within child protection systems until they turn 18. The transition point where they become adults - at age 18 - is identified by Barbu & Barbu & Pérez Barranco (2025) as one of the pathways into homelessness for unaccompanied minors. Previously, in their survey of experts in 16 EU member states plus the UK, the European Observatory on Homelessness (2016) reported heightened risks of homelessness when young people were moving to independent living upon reaching adulthood but highlighted that specific data on this was not available. The lack of data remains a problem although some recent studies will be referred to below.

To better understand homelessness at the point of changed status, we will now analyse two key interrelated drivers of homelessness when migration status or age-related transitions occur, namely 1) discrimination and racism; 2) financial and bureaucratic barriers and limited support

3.4.1 Discrimination and racism

While the issue of discrimination and racism is relevant to each of the transition points, we focus on it at the midpoint. There is evidence of **widespread and rising discrimination against people of colour** across the EU. For example, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights' *Being Black in the EU* report found that 45% of respondents reported experiencing racial discrimination in the five years preceding the survey (FRA, 2024). Such discrimination is evident in many spheres of life, including in relation to housing. Allsopp et al. (2024, p. 102) contend that the experience of housing access for migrants is "intimately shaped by discrimination and racism, whether structural - through clear mechanisms of separation and exclusion, as well as through subtle logics of abandonment and inaction, or in the ordinary space of everyday housing interactions and routines". This argument is borne out by research evidence across many countries. For example, in the research by the FRA (2024), almost one in four (23%) respondents of African descent indicated that they were prevented from renting a property by a private property owner because of their racial or ethnic origin. In Belgium, in research on the rental housing market in Wallonia - in which correspondence tests were used

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- Verhaeghe (2020) found evidence of 'systematic discrimination' against ethnic minorities, with candidates with a Moroccan name much less likely to be invited to view a dwelling when compared with candidates with a Belgian name. In Spain, recent research by Martín and Buch Sánchez (2020) suggest that racism in the private rental market is on the rise. As they note, 81.8% will accept indirect discriminatory conditions that exacerbate accessibility to affordable housing, such as: advertising most expensive properties, requesting financial information, reducing contract periods, including clauses for property recovery, and others (ibid, p. 14). Writing in the context of Riga, Latvia, Allsopp et al. (2024, p. 105) discuss how, in the context of a tight affordable rental housing market, usually discrimination from landlords involves 'hung-up calls', something which they argue intensifies "the silencing of this being an issue at all". However, in addition, as justifications for choosing a different tenant, landlords use tropes based on "ethicised and racialised characterisations (towards 'Blacks', 'Asians' or 'Arabs') of otherness that can be blatantly racist" (ibid, p.105). Interestingly, regarding the context in Leipzig, Germany, Allsopp et al. (2024) again outline how landlords sometimes justify their refusal to rent to Black or Brown on the basis that they are trying to protect refugees from becoming targets in the local neighbourhood. In addition, even when housing is secured racism can result in subsequent homelessness. For example, drawing on research in Finland, Hedayati (2024b) refers to incidents of racism from neighbours resulting in the termination of leases.

Overall, it is important to note that seemingly individual discriminatory practices must be seen in the context of wider political and structural environments in which such racism flourishes. Indeed, Walker (2025, p. 18) argues that "negative stereotypes in public discourse around immigration have a deep influence on estate agents, creating barriers for racialised migrants". Furthermore, the discriminatory implications of meritocratic criteria utilised largely by migration law, should be noted. While differences in treatment based on characteristics protected by universal treaties (i.e. ethnicity, gender, etc.) have subsided, as Desmet et al. emphasise (2025, p. 5), class and education impact on different aspects of migratory life. This, for instance, is exemplified in the economic thresholds required for certain types of visa, as well as policies in place to tackle

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labour shortages by encouraging certain types of migration. In any case, meritocratic criteria entangle with migration governance, favouring or discouraging migratory mobilities, and eventually determining eligibility for migration. It can be argued that the discriminatory implications of this approach impact on the conditions of access to housing, further feeding back into exclusionary discourses pertaining to refugees' and migrants' representation.

It is recognised that discrimination in the area of housing not only impacts living conditions but can also significantly impact other areas of life, including health and access to education and employment (Ringelheim & Bernard, 2013). In the case of the aforementioned discriminatory implications of meritocratic criteria, family life is also impacted, for instance due to increased dependency between partners (Belloni & Cleton, 2025; Kofman, 2018). In the context of a widespread shortage of affordable housing throughout Europe, systemic racism and discrimination exacerbate housing instability[7]. Studies throughout Europe consistently refer to the discrimination experienced by migrants, international protection applicants, and beneficiaries of international protection both when engaging with state housing providers and services and when attempting to access the private rented sector. Writing in the Irish context Lima (2025, p. 38) argues that housing discrimination against migrants "operates through nuanced and systemic mechanisms that can be difficult to pinpoint but are pervasive in affecting housing opportunities". She refers to a "preference for local applicants, biased communication practices, and differential treatment based on identity markers" (ibid, p. 38). Similarly, Haj Ahmad & Busch-Geertsema (2024, p. 137), in their paper in relation to homeless migrants and mobile EU citizens, argue that "the available data suggest that when it comes to homelessness, racism goes beyond individual behaviour and is to be understood rather as a socially effective system of producing

[7] Housing instability may involve several expressions, for instance: severe rent burden, overcrowding, residential displacement/ mobility, poor housing quality (chemical/ biological/ structural), homelessness (PFC 2019). Housing instability may affect disproportionately individuals from certain socio-economic groups, for instance people who have not had access to employment and regular income, or people who are discriminated against, etc., and its implications pertain to all aspects of a person's life, including physical and mental health and wellbeing (ODPHP, n.d.)

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and demarcating 'others', which serves to clarify 'one's own' and preserve one's own privileges and adapts accordingly to the respective circumstance". Paidakaki (2021, citing Kaika, 2017), also discusses urban inequalities and discriminatory housing policies that divide people into a native "us" versus a migrant "them" dichotomy. This polarization drives some national citizens to support exclusionary practices out of fear or racism, while motivating others to fight against them through compassion and philanthropy.

Regarding the transition point where migration status changes, the European Observatory on Homelessness (2016) in their survey of experts from 12 EU member states reported that many of the experts identified prejudice as a barrier for beneficiaries of international protection in their search for housing. More recently, and in relation to specific national contexts, Rusiłowicz et al. (2025) refer to **discrimination in the housing market** as one of the key challenges facing beneficiaries of international protection in Poland. In its Concluding Observations on its Seventh Periodic Report of Poland, the United Nations Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (2024) highlighted that in Poland "particularly refugees are at risk of exploitative practices by landlords, as well as at risk of homelessness" (p. 7). Several studies in the Irish context have found evidence of discrimination when those exiting 'direct provision' were attempting to secure housing (e.g. Finn & Mayock, 2022; Murphy & Stapleton, 2024). In the latter study, it was found that beneficiaries of international protection experienced discrimination on several grounds: ethnicity, immigration status, being in receipt of social protection payments for housing, and because they were coming from international protection accommodation settings, with a study by ActionAid Ireland (2026) also referencing discrimination based on family status (for example, being a lone parent) and gender. Often intersectional discrimination is experienced (ActionAid Ireland, 2026). As will be referred to in the next section, discrimination in other areas – for example in relation to securing employment – can also further exacerbate housing challenges. The highly competitive housing market compounds the barriers faced by beneficiaries of international protection, including the discrimination barrier (Murphy & Stapleton, 2024).

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Unaccompanied minors may face housing-related discrimination and racism at the point of transition from childhood to adulthood, when their living arrangements are likely to change. Ní Raghallaigh et al.'s (2025) research in relation to separated children in the Irish context gives examples of racism experienced by young people in their encounters with government agencies, including an example of one young person's experiences of racism when accessing a homeless needs assessment upon turning 18. While at times unaccompanied young people may be somewhat shielded from these experiences if the child to adult transition period is less abrupt/more continuous, experiences of racial discrimination are likely to arise at a future point, as was the case in Walker's (2025) ethnographic research with former unaccompanied minors in Bologna, Italy. Walker (2025, p. 13) contends that "legal belonging rarely coincides with inclusion in the housing and employment sector", indicating that all the young men who participated in her research experienced "rental racism" following their eventual move from state provided accommodation. This was perceived by the young people as the norm in Bologna. Like other authors, Walker (2025, p. 15) argues that "the inaccessibility of Bologna's rental market towards those racialized as others can be understood as a manifestation of the interconnected impacts of platform capital (Airbnb), which exacerbates pre-existing socio-spatial inequalities (Gainsforth, 2020), and deep-rooted racism, exacerbated by the far-right government".

For those facing a changed status when their asylum claim is rejected, housing precarity is likely to be even worse. For example, Ellul & Vella (2024) refer to the "increasingly restrictive regulations" in the Maltese context which lead to additional challenges for "rejected" migrants to access adequate and affordable housing and shelter" (p. 222). Similar is the case in Greece, as previously mentioned in this report.

3.4.2 Financial and bureaucratic barriers and limited support

In addition to racism and discrimination, refugees and migrants who are seeking housing at the second transition point - that of changed status - are faced with considerable financial and bureaucratic barriers and limited support in navigating these. Different cohorts of refugees and migrants are likely to experience these barriers in different ways.

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Financial barriers are likely to be faced by many migrant groups when they are seeking to access housing, including undocumented migrants, EU 'mobile citizens', as well as asylum seekers and refugees. In many countries, existing evidence suggests that due to a range of structural factors members of refugee and migrant communities are more likely to have been unemployed or in low paid employment (Fasani et al., 2022). This may mean that they struggle to evidence income or pay deposits (Haj Ahmad & Bush-Geertsema, 2024). For those who have sought international protection, structural barriers impeding the ability to work may have been present during their time living in accommodation settings: these barriers can include restrictions on the right to work (as discussed by Boobis et al., 2019 in relation to the UK), lack of recognition of qualifications, the rural location of some centres, lack of supports in entering the labour market in a new country, and racism and discrimination (Fasani, 2024; EC 2023, p. 16). The impact of these barriers follows through after their status changes when a decision is made on their protection claim. For example, unequal opportunities to access the labour market while in the international protection process results in a lack of access to finances and more limited social networks. Finn & Mayock (2022) in the Irish context identified limited financial resources as one of the factors creating challenges for those exiting the direct provision system that accommodates asylum seekers there. The same study, as well as a study by Hedayti (2024b) in Finland, pointed to the role of employers in helping people to secure housing, thus suggesting that without these networks finding housing is more difficult. Indeed, social networks can often be helpful in securing housing (Azevedo et al., 2024). For example, participants in Ellul & Vella (2024)'s study in Malta found that when leaving reception centres, accommodation was often secured through friends and acquaintances. Where people have not had opportunities to integrate in society, such networks are likely to be limited. Regarding the Portuguese context, Pedrosa (2024) indicates that a range of factors including high prices and the need to provide costly deposits, guarantors, and proof of income, make it challenging for asylum applicants and refugees to access the housing market. She contends that these groups, as a result, often end up in housing that is sub-standard or overcrowded. Importantly, she also notes that while these issues are at play for other groups too, the impact on those seeking protection and beneficiaries of

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protection is exacerbated by the absence of support networks amongst these groups. Brown et al (2024) also highlight the restrictive access to social networks that asylum seekers often face while living in dispersed asylum accommodation.

At the transition from asylum seeker accommodation to the wider communities, there are also many **administrative obstacles** to obtaining housing and to accessing housing supports (EMN, 2024). To begin with, while those with refugee status and subsidiary protection may be entitled to apply for social housing, in many countries lengthy waiting lists exist, meaning that access to social housing immediately upon exiting asylum seeker accommodation is unlikely. In addition, many BOIP may be disadvantaged by criteria for prioritisation on waiting lists (for example, length of time on the list) (Murphy & Stapleton, 2024). Added to the lengthy waits for social housing, in attempting to secure housing supports, many may face 'catch 22' situations[8]. For example, in Greece, the HELIOS program - which facilitated the transition to mainstream accommodation for individuals who have moved from the asylum seeker stage to recognized refugee status - had substantial limitations: beneficiaries needed to have a Greek bank account, and those who failed to leave reception within the allotted (short) time, were excluded from the programme (EUAA, n.d.). Additionally, the end of the programme in 2024 resulted in its projects being terminated (including housing), exposing its beneficiaries to housing precarity (Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al. 2025). In Bulgaria, beneficiaries face significant administrative hurdles to rent accommodation. They are required to provide valid identification to sign a rental contract, but domicile is needed to obtain an identification card (EUAA, n.d.). In the Irish context, referring to [then] requirement to provide proof of address before one can apply for Jobseekers Allowance, with an address at asylum seeker accommodation not being acceptable, Ní Raghallaigh et al. (2016, pp. 34-35) suggest that "systems seem to obstruct one another in allowing people to transition from [accommodation for asylum seekers] into the community". In addition, it may often be the case that beneficiaries of international protection may not be aware of social welfare supports that are available to them, as has been

[8] A 'catch-22' situation is a 'no win' situation where there is no meaningful option to choose from, due to the existence, for example, of contradictory rules.

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reported by Heydayati (2024a) in relation to Finland. Again, this is likely to be particularly the case if there have not been opportunities to integrate.

The financial and bureaucratic obstacles faced by those trying to move on from asylum accommodation are further compounded by extremely **tight deadlines to vacate reception centres**, to secure housing, and to transition to welfare support (if needed), in the context of severe housing shortages across many host countries. Research in several countries points to inadequate time periods to transition out of accommodation and a lack of support in doing so (Hedayati, 2024a & 2024b; Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025). In the United Kingdom, individuals granted or refused refugee status face a precarious transition period, with Brown et al.'s (2024) review of literature concluding that the "28-day move on process has been uniformly seen to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities" (p. 261). While recent policy shifts have adjusted the 'move-on' period - setting it at 42 days for many as of March 2026 - this timeframe often remains insufficient to secure alternative housing (Right to Remain, 2026). Also in England, the limited time to vacate National Asylum Support Service accommodation and lack of priority status (in the statutory homelessness system) are key obstacles (Mitton, 2020). While, in some countries, support systems are sometimes in place for this transition period, such as counselling, transitional housing, extended move-on periods in applicant accommodation or financial assistance (EMN, 2024), these supports are often inadequate or indeed beneficiaries of international protection are unaware of what they can access (see, for example, Hedayati, 2024a; ActionAid Ireland, 2026; Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025; Etzold et al., 2022).

Considerable financial and bureaucratic barriers are also faced at the transition point of changed status where someone becomes undocumented, including when a final negative decision has been made on an international protection claim and no other status has been granted. To begin with, people in such circumstances face the challenges of not being permitted to work and having limited or no access to social security systems resulting in a lack of income to pay for accommodation (Hedayati, 2024b). Indeed, refused asylum seekers across different countries lose entitlement to accommodation and support, making destitution and homelessness likely (Boobis et al., 2019; Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025). Refused

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asylum seekers or those who become undocumented for other reasons may manage to access work in the underground economy, often amounting to low-paid and perhaps exploitative situations (Boobis et al., 2019). Such situations will make it difficult to save sufficient money to be able to maintain an existing lease or to be able to secure new accommodation. In addition, landlords may be unwilling or unable to rent a property to someone who is in low paid work or on zero-hour contracts as they may consider their income to be too unstable. One's irregular immigration status may also present a barrier, with landlords in some jurisdictions (for instance, England, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland, Greece) facing restrictions from renting to people in those situations (Boobis et al., 2019 re. England; Linekar et al. 2026 re. Croatia, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain; Azevedo et al., 2024 re. Hungary, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Ireland). Giansanti et al. (2022), referring to the Italian and Swedish contexts, discuss the situation of individuals with failed international protection applications, some of whom become homeless and then subsequently move to a different country in the hope of a more positive outcome.

For **unaccompanied young people** who are at the **child-adult transition point**, financial and bureaucratic barriers also exist. The research literature points to multiple challenges faced by unaccompanied young people at this juncture, including difficulties related to housing (Gimeno-Monterde et al., 2021; Norton et al., 2023). A recent qualitative study in the Irish context highlights specific concerns about the transition to adulthood period for unaccompanied minors who had secured status, with participants pointing to significant challenges in securing accommodation, with the inadequacy of financial supports also highlighted (Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2025). One participant detailed a trajectory of housing instability following their departure from care, which included periods spent in homeless hostels. Those who had yet to receive an outcome on their asylum claim were faced with moving to adult reception centres where support was significantly less available than in their previous care environments. Research in relation to unaccompanied minors in Spain by Gimeno-Monterde et al. (2021) referred to the risk of onward movement to other cities, sometimes to squat conditions, or the continuation of the migration journey towards Central and Northern Europe,

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where homelessness remains a significant threat, exacerbated by the restrictive requirements of the Dublin Regulation. Lønning (2024), writing about young people on the move in Greece – mainly male unaccompanied young people from Afghanistan – found that those with deportation orders "found shelter in abandoned buildings and sought places to hide within these to escape police raids" (876) as they awaited opportunities to get to Italy. In their scoping review in relation to missing unaccompanied minors in Greece, Sammut et al. (2026) found evidence of young people both remaining unofficially in Greece and engaging in irregular onward movement.

Overall, the literature suggests that **support systems and structures are often lacking** for refugee and migrant populations at these transition points. For example, writing in the UK context, Boobis et al. (2019) refer to the lack of legal advice available to migrants and the lack of financial support available to some cohorts. The study also highlights institutional barriers, such as a lack of awareness among professionals regarding the legal entitlements of migrant groups, or lack of professional interpretation, which is often necessary in such contexts. This can result in the denial of financial support for which these individuals are eligible. The latter is also evident in research in other contexts, including Ireland (see Nasc, 2025) and Greece, Italy and Germany (see Etzold et al., 2022). In the absence of entitlement to state supports, migrants are likely to rely on NGOs or on their own networks (Giansanti et al., 2022, drawing on Ambrosini, 2015).

Language barriers pose particular challenges in accessing financial support systems and bureaucracy. Arising again from structural level deficits where language learning is generally not sufficiently supported, many beneficiaries of international protection may have had very limited opportunities to learn the local language while living in reception centres (Glimer, 2021; Haneman, 2018). Available research suggests that supports to address language barriers are often insufficient: for example, translated materials and interpretation services are often inadequate or entirely absent. Consequently, refugees struggle to navigate complex bureaucratic systems, increasing the likelihood of misinformation and misunderstandings (Boobis, et al., 2019; Nasc, 2025). However, this may, in some jurisdictions, depend on the language: for example in Finland Hedayati (2024b)

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reports the recent introduction of forms in Ukrainian and Russian but not in the languages of other people of refugee background. Limited literacy - in both native and host-country language - presents a significant obstacle, often compounded by a lack of digital proficiency (ibid). Hedayati (2024b) also draws attention to the situation of working migrants in the Finnish context who may lack knowledge about support and lack Finnish language proficiency. However, they may not have access to free language classes as they are not unemployed. This exclusion further elevates their risk of homelessness.

For **unaccompanied minors** who have reached the child-adult transition point, lack of support is a very significant issue in many countries and, in the context of significant financial and bureaucratic challenges, this affects their access to housing. In many jurisdictions, unaccompanied minors receive support while under the age of 18, as they fall under the remit of child protection systems, which often includes foster or residential care (Van der Stighelen, et al., 2025), but this support reduces considerably or even entirely, after leaving care, both when young people have secured refugee status and when they are still awaiting a decision on their application. This transition is particularly precarious as, unlike the general population of care leavers, most unaccompanied young people lack local family support systems, and their broader social networks remain underdeveloped due to their relatively recent arrival. In the Irish context, Ní Raghallaigh et al.'s (2025) research illustrates these challenges, with one young respondent describing the transition to aftercare as 'a bit fast' (p. 106). Research in Spain points to difficulties too, with some professionals who participated in the research by Gimeno-Monterde et al. (2021) pointing to a "double failure" that occurs when unaccompanied minors do not have their own resources (e.g. legal status or employment) and when the public childcare services are not providing ongoing support. This "double failure" involves the "loss of the social value of the previous investment and creation of a new homelessness profile, affected by the possibility of being deported" (ibid, p. 5). It is important to note too that in the context of limited support, 'missing' unaccompanied minors - young people who disappear after arriving in Europe with their whereabouts unknown - is a cause of increasing

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concern throughout the continent (Barbu & Pérez Barranco, 2025; van den Hof, 2026).

Having said that, it is of course not always the case that unaccompanied minors feel unsupported at the point of turning 18. For instance, Walker's research in the Italian context (previously discussed) found that young men from one particular centre in Bologna (former unaccompanied minors) felt supported in their transition into adulthood, as well as beyond the transition point (Walker, 2025). Importantly, they had refugee status or humanitarian protection, and the same organisation continued to provide accommodation at the point of transition and for a period of time afterwards.

3.5 Transition Points 3: Homelessness at the point of Family Reunification

The final transition point we consider is the transition that occurs following family reunification. The European Migration Network (EMN) describes family reunification as "one of the main avenues of legal migration in the European Union (EU) in recent decades" (EMN, 2025, p. 2025), though regulations are in place (see, for example, Potter al., 2025; Smyth, 2025; Radjenovic, 2023). Both labour migrants and beneficiaries of international protection can apply for family members to be reunited with them. Family reunification can occur in more informal ways also (for example, when family members arrive through EU free movement or through irregular means). Family reunification is considered by the EU's Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification as "a necessary way of making family life possible" (CoEU, 2003, p. 1.) It is also a means to restore 'normalcy' to refugees' lives, as well as to bring possibly vulnerable members of their families into safe conditions (Potter et al., 2025, p. 1) and amounts to an alternative pathway to protection for refugees. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles describes family reunification as "a key right for beneficiaries of international protection" (ECRE, 2022, p. 5).

For many international protection applicants, their ultimate goal is to be reunited with family (Hinds, 2018; Bergset et al., 2025). Research has shown that separation from family has a considerable negative impact on the health and wellbeing of migrants and refugees (Johansen & Tørrisplass, 2024) and the

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evidence suggests that the ability to integrate is hindered if family reunification is not possible (Morris et al., 2021). However, notwithstanding the great joy and sense of relief experienced when reunification occurs (Bergset et al., 2025; Smith et al., 2020), the available research literature points to the considerable stress involved in family reunification, at all stages: when applying, when preparing for the arrival of family and after the family ultimately have been reunited (Smith et al., 2023). However, it is notable that there is a scarcity of research evidence in relation to family reunification generally and that research evidence noting homelessness at this transition point is restricted to a small number of countries, including Ireland, Belgium and the UK and primarily focuses on refugee family reunification. Family reunification with beneficiaries of international protection is of course likely to be more relevant to countries considered 'destination countries', which the above three arguably are. Furthermore, while family reunification has long been hindered by a complex array of legal, bureaucratic, and administrative burdens, the situation has deteriorated significantly in recent years. Across Europe, numerous states have introduced and implemented increasingly restrictive policies that further curtail this right (FRA, 2026; Sirriyeh, 2026).

The limited evidence from several European countries suggests that this transition point also exacerbates housing stress at least in some countries. Indeed, writing about the Scottish context, Marsden and Harris (2015) refer to the period immediately after arrival as a "transition crisis point" where refugees and their reunited family members are "at a higher risk of experiencing destitution and homelessness or severe overcrowding" (p. 16). At a basic level, reunification means that the refugee sponsor often needs to find a larger place to live (Baillot et al., 2023). Bearing in mind the challenges in securing housing that beneficiaries of international protection face at the point of securing status – as discussed previously – and the challenges of integrating into the labour market (ECRE, 2023), the likelihood of having a big enough place to accommodate family members is low (Carlier et al., 2025).

When migrants arrive via spousal visas the risk of homelessness may not be as high at the point of arrival. For example, in research in the Irish context, Finn & Mayock (2022), discuss the situation of women who arrived to join their husbands

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on spousal visas. They were dependent on their husband's financial and housing resources. In such circumstances, people arriving through this kind of 'reunification' will often enter private rental accommodation sourced by their spouse prior to their arrival: this most likely reflects the general rules regarding the granting of such visas where proof of housing may be a requirement. The European Migration Network, in its analysis of law and practice across Europe in relation to the family reunification of third-country nationals, indicates that material and integration requirements are "key conditions" (EMN 2025, p. 7) for family reunification, but that often exemptions are applied by countries for particular groups including beneficiaries of international protection. In addition, it is important to note that notwithstanding the desire of families to be together, labour migrants arguably have more choice as regards reunification: they may be able to weigh up whether they have sufficient resources to support their family following reunification and therefore decide what is in their family's best interest. For example, if they have no accommodation, they might postpone reunification. For refugees, there may be little choice given the dangerous and often life-or-death situations in which their family members may be residing. Research shows the decisive role that labour and status may play in family reunification realities (Ryndyk, 2020; Christ & Etzold, 2025 and 2022; Arapiles & Mekonnen, 2025; Belloni & Verschraegen, 2025; Debruyne, 2025).

The risk factors discussed in relation to the changed status transition point are likely to be relevant at this transition point also though some other specific issues are also at play. The literature points, in particular, to two broad factors that exacerbate housing stress when family reunification occurs, namely (1) financial and bureaucratic hurdles and lack of support and (2) relationship challenges in the context of migratory governance.

3.5.1 Financial and bureaucratic barriers and limited support

In its research across Europe, The European Migration Network (EMN, 2025) found that **high housing costs** are among several factors that can hinder the ability to reunify with family. In many countries, proof of suitable accommodation as well as stable and regular financial resources may be required for family reunification. This makes family reunification unattainable for some but also means that, for many

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arriving through family reunification, accommodation is provided by the sponsor upon arrival of their family members. However, the rules for migrants can be different to those for refugees (EMN, 2025).

EMN found that, following family reunification, only a small number of countries "grant access to social benefits to family members under the same conditions as their citizens or all third-country nationals" (2025, p. 55). The same study (EMN 2025) highlights problems with **bureaucratic processes** upon arrival of family members, resulting in delays in accessing rights. The organisation further identifies lack of knowledge about family reunification processes across local authorities as an issue in several countries. They also highlight challenges in finding housing and accommodation in Denmark, France, Ireland and Luxemburg. Research also points to the benefits of their being support available to navigate bureaucratic procedures and to access rights (Marsden & Harris, 2015).

As already noted, in the context of refugee family reunification, sponsors may be exempt from the accommodation and financial requirements that apply to other cohorts, in an effort to ensure protection of the individuals concerned. While this is welcome and necessary, in the absence of support to compensate for the requirement, housing precarity and homelessness remain significant risks. Within the Irish context research by Smith et al. (2022) on refugee family reunification found that there was almost an **expectation of homelessness** upon arrival, with some families entering emergency homeless accommodation immediately. Homelessness upon arrival was evident in Scotland also, with 28% of families in that study presenting to homelessness services immediately or within days of arriving (Marsden & Harris, 2015). Others experienced overcrowding – some for protracted periods - while living with their sponsor in accommodation unsuited to the family size.

Finding suitable accommodation for reunified family members is extremely difficult in the context of a shortage of housing and given the multiple barriers that refugees and migrants face generally, as previously discussed. Again **'catch-22' situations** can be evident. For example, securing housing via mechanisms such as

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Ireland's Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)[9] is severely impacted by requirements that do not take the circumstances of these families into account. For instance, since both the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) require the family's physical presence in Ireland, sponsors reliant on these supports are unable to secure accommodation prior to their family's arrival, unless they possess significant personal financial resources. The latter is unlikely, given the likelihood of beneficiaries of international protection having limited financial resources due to multiple factors, including having accrued debt during the family reunification application process and when funding travel to Ireland, something which is not funded by the Irish state, even in the case of former unaccompanied minors (Smith et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2025). This means that families either end up living in cramped accommodation - like in the Scottish study cited above - or need to access emergency homeless accommodation, which in itself can be difficult to access without specific documentation. Those with larger families can face additional obstacles (Smith et al., 2022) or may face having to split up and live in different places as found by Carlier et al. (2025) in their research in Belgium. Similar circumstances are relevant in other countries also: for example, Debruyne (2024a) outlined how unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands cannot apply for an increased social assistance benefit until their family arrive and so securing a larger home in advance of their arrival is next to impossible. In Scotland, Marsden & Harris (2015) pointed to the risk of destitution as a result of lengthy timescales for receipt of social welfare payments, with the risks greater for those not in receipt of support with navigating the social welfare processes. The authors also highlight situations where reunited refugees are not eligible for financial support (for example, people who came on discretionary visas).

Despite the multiple bureaucratic challenges likely to be faced by reunified family members and their sponsors, the literature points to **limited state support**

[9] In Ireland the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support provided by local authorities to people who have a long-term housing need. It consists of a monthly rental payment made by the local authority to a landlord, with tenants making a weekly HAP contribution to the local authority based on their income and ability to pay. Homeless HAP provides more support to tenants that HAP and is aimed at people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. For more information on HAP and Homeless HAP see here

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available to families after their arrival via family reunification. This is evident for example in Belgium (Debruyne, 2024b) and in Ireland (Smith et al., 2025), with 'sponsors' often shouldering considerable responsibility for the family members reunited with them, even in cases where the sponsors are unaccompanied minors (Bergset et al., 2025; Smith et al., 2025). As Bergset et al. (2025) argue, regarding the situation in Belgium and Norway, unaccompanied minors have to "compensate for system deficits" (p. 1020). Similarly, Smith et al. (2025, p. 12) contend that the approach of the Irish state to the reception of reunified refugee families is characterised as "careless hospitality, which pushes a disproportionate level of responsibility on refugee sponsors for supporting settlement of their family members". Participants in research in the UK by Baillot et al. (2023) experienced barriers in accessing support from statutory housing services, including some outright hostility. Sirriyeh's (2026) analysis of family reunification policy for refugee children and young people in Ireland and the UK also pointed to the need for more support following reunification. In the absence of state support, co-nationals, extended family members and workers in third sector organisations can often play an important role (Baillot et al., 2023; Marsden & Harris, 2015).

As a response to housing crises in various countries and in the context of increasingly restrictive migration regimes, in recent years governments have introduced **new requirements** regarding income and housing in the context of family reunification. For example, ECRE (2022, p. 21) reported that the Netherlands introduced a temporary housing requirement in 2022 meaning that families could only obtain the visa for family reunification if their 'sponsor' lived in approved housing or if 15 months had passed since the procedure was initiated. In January 2026, Ireland announced more restrictive rules in relation to family reunification, including the need to show financial self-sufficiency (DJHAM-IE, 2025). It is understood that, under the new rules, the income and social welfare/housing assistance claims of beneficiaries of international protection will be considered when applications for family reunification are being assessed (Irish Refugee Council, 2026). While this may reduce the likelihood of homelessness among reunified families, it is also likely to result in fewer families having the opportunity to reach safety through reunification in the first place.

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It is important to note that even when housing precarity and homelessness is not an issue at the point of arrival for reunified families, there is a risk that it could become an issue at a later point. This is likely to be particularly the case in situations where reunified family members face challenges with integration, for example, accessing education, having qualifications recognised, accessing employment and acquiring the local language. Challenges in all of these areas are highlighted in European Migration Network's (2025) research.

3.5.2 Relationship challenges in the context of migration governance

Relationship challenges following family reunification – whether the reunification is with refugees or with migrants - are also likely to be a risk factor for homelessness, particularly when set in the context of migration governance. Following arrival via family reunification, relationships with family members hare often very important sources of support for new arrivals (Marsden & Harris, 2015). However, a myriad of factors can lead to challenges arising and in some cases, these can even lead to relationship breakdown. This is however, a very under researched area. We will draw here on a small number of relevant studies.

The manner in which migration is governed means that frequently family members who arrive via reunification may have **fewer rights** than their 'sponsor' relatives. As Finn & Mayock (2022, p.185) argue in relation to people who arrive on spousal visas, "generally, spousal routes to housing can be characterised as highly dependent; reliant on relationship harmony for stability and by very constrained access to employment and housing at the point of exiting an abusive relationship". Often spouses in these circumstances may have limited rights to housing and employment. Orsini & Merla (2025), writing about domestic violence in the context of family reunification in Belgium, point to the dependence of the reunified member of the couple on their partner, given that - in that context - sponsors must prove that they have sufficient means to provide for the family members joining them. Depending on the jurisdiction and type of visa granted, migrants arriving for family reunification may face restricted labour market access with their residency often contingent upon their spouse for several years. The European Migration Network (2025) confirms significant variation across Europe regarding early access to autonomous residence, warning that such delays "risk dependency on the

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sponsor" (p. 7). Based on observations in a Belgian family tribunal and interviews with migrant women and practitioners, Orsini and Merla (2025) highlight that the stringent legal requirements attached to spousal visas exacerbate power imbalances, particularly in cases of domestic abuse. While emphasising the agency exercised by women in these circumstances, they also highlight the lack of economic and social capital that migrant women in these situations might face. While housing and homelessness are not addressed directly, the research evidences how women could not access support or leave abusive relationships because of their dependence as a result of migration policies, thereby suggesting they could face obstacles to securing independent housing or state supports.

For people who arrive via refugee family reunification, similar issues to those outlined above can apply. Smith et al.'s (2020 and 2025) research in the Irish context highlights the **relationship challenges** that can arise following reunification, with a small number of participants giving examples of instances where relationships broke down entirely. While evidence is lacking, it is likely that risk of relationship breakdown is heightened in the case of refugee family reunification due to the combination of difficult and sometimes traumatic pre migration experiences, long periods of separation from one another, and the multiple stressors experienced post migration. These post migration challenges include many of those already discussed, primarily challenges stemming from structural level issues: housing instability and homelessness, bureaucratic barriers, financial precarity, experiences of discrimination and racism, alongside limited support systems. Indeed Marsden & Harris (2015) found that financial difficulties experienced upon arrival, often caused by delays in being able to access social welfare supports, impacted family relations at a critical time. Several participants in the study by Smith et al. (2020) raised concerns regarding homelessness in these contexts, noting instances where individuals felt unable to leave abusive or precarious relationships due to the ongoing housing crisis.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter extended the discussion in Chapter 2 by synthesising current literature that helps to explain why refugee and migrant populations are particularly vulnerable to homelessness in Europe. Framed around three transition

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points encountered by refugees and migrants - the point of initial arrival, the point of changed migration or age status, and the point of arrival of family members via family reunification - this chapter underlined the numerous challenges that refugees and migrants encounter in accessing housing and the multiple risks they face as regards homelessness as a result.

The analysis highlighted that homelessness among migrants and refugees in Europe reflects interconnected systemic, structural, policy-driven, and individual themes unfolding at critical moments in the migration trajectory. The themes discussed were: restrictive access to welfare and housing support; delayed access to material reception conditions; inadequate material reception conditions; discrimination and racism; financial and bureaucratic barriers and limited support; and relationship challenges in the context of migration governance. In particular, the research evidence presented in this chapter showed that while individual level factors (e.g. language ability, financial resources, relationship breakdown, lack of social networks) influence the housing trajectories of refugees and migrants, it is primarily the structural factors that lead to homelessness among these cohorts. Indeed structural factors also influence the existence of factors that might be considered individual. Unequal access to housing is driven by a range of structural factors, including affordable housing shortages, unequal labour market access, structural and institutional racism, restrictive reception conditions, bureaucratic hurdles and exclusionary support systems affecting migrant populations. The literature suggests, therefore, that state-controlled structural factors primarily account for the higher representation of refugees and migrants in homelessness statistics. At the same time, variations between national contexts, as well as differences across migrant groups (e.g. EU citizens, third-country nationals, international protection appliants, beneficiaries of protection, and people with irregular status) result in uneven exposure to these institutional constraints and, consequently, differing levels of risk and vulnerability to homelessness.

To conclude, although this chapter consolidated current literature to clarify the complex nature of refugee and migrant homelessness, significant gaps in the research remain to be addressed. This is particularly important given the ever-changing geopolitical context and evolving policy and practice landscape.

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Therefore, the next chapter presents newly collected data which further illuminates these complex issues.

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Chapter 4 The Over-Representation of Migrants and Refugees in Homelessness Statistics: Insights from Professionals

4.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the statistical overview and the literature review presented in the previous two chapters, seeking to complement this existing knowledge by drawing on newly collected qualitative data. Although existing data and literature provide a broad overview of the scale and general patterns of homelessness among refugees and migrants, the field lacks empirical insights into how these factors function in practice across different countries and groups and how they relate to the transition points we have identified. The qualitative data, based on in-depth interviews with key professional stakeholders across seven European countries, allows us to analyse in more detail the nature, extent and causes of homelessness among migrants and refugees.

To begin, this chapter outlines the research methodology and the country and interviewee selection processes. It then discusses in detail the data from the key informant interviews. Within this discussion, the perspectives of participants on the extent of homelessness are briefly presented before moving on to a more detailed analysis of the causes of homelessness, with reference to the key transition points discussed previously.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Overview of key informant interviews

In-depth key informant interviews were used to attain a richness of knowledge around homelessness among migrants and refugees throughout Europe. In particular, in these interviews we were interested in exploring the factors that explain the increased risk of homelessness among refugees and migrants, with reference to the transition points previously explored. Through this data collection we aimed to develop a better understanding of homelessness among refugees and migrants which will then feed directly into the next phase of our work, exploring good practices and solutions that can mitigate against homelessness risk for this cohort.

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For key informant interviews we chose semi-structured interviews as the most appropriate interviewing approach for this research topic. Here the interviewer has an interview schedule with specific predetermined questions (and topics) but there is room for probing and the addition of new questions when needed. Before and after each interview we revisited the topic guide and annotated it as needed based on specific expertise expected from a particular individual or based on new information learned.

4.2.2 Sampling and recruitment strategy

Given the multiple different migration and asylum contexts across the EU and UK, in our interviews with professionals we have focused on a small number of countries that capture the most diverse range of situations in which migrant and refugee homelessness occurs. Our selection of countries was based on a number of factors. To begin with, we aimed to select countries with varied *welfare regimes* (i.e. how countries approach social welfare and services) and *housing regimes* (i.e. a country's approach to providing and regulating housing) as different regimes are likely to result in different approaches to addressing homelessness and housing exclusion. Specifically, and in line with the approach of other work packages, we build on the categorisation categorisation of *housing-welfare regimes* presented by Dewilde et al (2025) in Work Package 3 for grouping different countries. This categorisation is outlined in Table 8[10] below.

Table 8: Housing-welfare regimes

Regime	Countries	Description
Social-democratic unitary rental market-countries	Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands	Universal welfare, strong regulation, extensive social rental sector open to broad population
Conservative-corporatist unitary rental market-countries	Austria, France, Germany	Welfare tied to employment; strong but stratified rental systems
North-West-European (NWE) homeownership countries with a dual rental market	Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, UK	Division between private market and state provided housing, social housing reserved for the poorest

[10] A simplified version of this table was included in EqualHouse (2025) *Deliverable: D3.1 Housing Inequalities Profile*.

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Central- and Eastern-European (CEE) countries	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	Privatisation of state-owned housing, underdeveloped public housing sector, larger role of family in provision of housing
Baltic states	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	Weaker welfare state, limited social housing
Southern-European (SE) family-based homeownership countries	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain	Family-based welfare, less state intervention in housing, very limited social housing

We aimed to select one case study country from each major housing regime. However, in addition to housing-regimes, we also considered migration patterns as they related to these countries, for example, whether they were generally understood to be arrival countries, transit routes, or destination states. We also considered geographical locations, such as the countries located at the European border versus non-border countries, given the impact of these factors on migration flows. Finally, we considered three practical considerations: (1) the feasibility of conducting research in a specific country, (2) the existing connections of the researchers, and (3) potential language barriers.

After considering the above factors, we selected the following 7 countries: Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Poland, Latvia and Greece, as indicated in the table below. By looking across these contrasting contexts, we can begin to develop a picture of the different factors shaping migrant and refugee homelessness in Europe.

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Table 9: Housing Regimes and Migration Contexts – Selected Countries

Housing regime	Selected country	Migration Context / Geographical Location	Number of interviews
Social-democratic unitary rental market-countries	Denmark	Destination Country / Not on the Border of Europe	2
Conservative-corporatist unitary rental market-countries	Germany	Destination Country / Not on the Border of Europe	2
North-West-European (NWE) homeownership countries with a dual rental market	Belgium and Ireland	Destination Country / Not on the Border of Europe	3 4
Central- and Eastern-European (CEE) countries	Poland	Arrival/Transit/Border Country	3
Baltic states	Latvia	Arrival/Transit/Border Country	2
Southern-European (SE) family-based homeownership countries	Greece	Arrival/Transit/ Border Country	4

Within each country we interviewed between 2 and 4 key professionals. The participants were selected based on their professional experience and expertise, working at the intersection of homelessness and migration. Given the broad focus of the work package, which is exploring homelessness and housing among refugees and migrants, some participants had more knowledge about one cohort of migrants than another but we aimed to get a balance of expertise in each country overall. In total 20 professionals were interviewed, all of whom were well positioned to speak to the research questions.

4.2.3 Ethical considerations

The key informant interviews were conducted in line with standard principles of ethical research. A low-risk ethics review process at University College Dublin was completed. All individuals gave informed consent prior to the interview, both in

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writing and orally. Within this process, we ensured that the participants understood the purpose of the research, how their answers would be used, and that they were aware they could withdraw at any time. We made every effort to confidentiality and anonymity by removing individuals' names and affiliations from the transcripts, which were in turn identified only by a number. All files were saved in a secure UCD drive and accessed only by members of the research team.

4.2.4 Data collection process and data analysis

Interviews were conducted online via Zoom in English and lasted approximately one hour. An automatic zoom transcription was generated initially. This transcript was then thoroughly checked, with inaccuracies corrected. Data was then analysed thematically.

4.2.5 Limitations

The broad remit of the Work Package, which focuses on both refugees and migrants - a very diverse population, subject to hugely different regulations and processes - posed challenges. As noted, participants sometimes had particular experience regarding one group (e.g. EU migrant workers) but not another (e.g. international protection applications), or vice versa. We managed this limitation by endeavouring to ensure diverse expertise across the various participants. Language also posed challenges. All interviews were conducted in English, as this was the only common language that all members of the research team spoke fluently. This meant that in some contexts it was challenging to recruit professionals with the relevant expertise who also spoke English at a sufficient level.

4.3. Findings

The findings section is structured in two parts. The first section discusses the qualitative data in relation to the extent and nature of homelessness and housing precarity among migrants and refugees. The second section, constituting the primary focus of this chapter, discusses in detail the participants' perspectives in relation to the causes of increased risk of homelessness and housing precarity among this cohort.

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4.3.1 The extent and nature of homelessness and housing precarity among refugees and migrants

In line with the quantitative data, homelessness among people of migrant and refugee background was identified as a significant issue across most of the countries in question. In describing the extent of homelessness, most of the participants described their national contexts in broadly similar terms, referencing, in particular, that the over-representation of refugees and migrants in homelessness is a growing issue.

For example, regarding over-representation, a Danish[11] and Belgian participant stated:

> "But from the people living on the streets, quite a lot of them were migrants. Compared to .... the total, amount of individuals." (SH18 Denmark)

> "A vast majority of the homeless people in Brussels are migrants. [...] In whatever stage of their... procedure, at the end of it where they didn't get asylum, or the beginning of it when they haven't gotten access to the asylum." (SH1, Belgium)

Similar to the comment by the Belgian participant, an Irish participant referenced homelessness as a 'pervasive problem' at all stages of the international protection process:

> "Unfortunately, it feels like it's become a very pervasive problem from start to finish for a particular demographic of protection applicants..... I'd say there's homelessness across the board, now throughout all kind of stages of the process, from start to finish." (SH2, Ireland)

[11] For ease, 'Danish' participant refers to a participant working in the Danish context. It does not refer to their nationality or citizenship. The same applies for all other participants (e.g. Belgian participant (referring to someone working in Belgium); Greek participant (referring to someone working in Greece) etc.

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In relation to the worsening rate of homelessness among migrant populations, a participant with extensive knowledge of homelessness across Europe stated the following:

> "So I think it's fair to say that the extent to which migrants are affected by this housing crisis and homelessness it's quite a high one, a big one, and it's becoming.... worse and worse ... in the past few years. And yeah, ... from what we've been monitoring and trying to do some research on this, we see it as a European issue as well, because it's not just Greece and Italy, because these are the entry points, and it's not just Belgium or the UK, because these are more popular destinations. We see it happening more and more in, yeah, across Europe, so it's also, Ireland, as you very well know, France, Spain, the Netherlands, again, has had, in the past years some .... very worrying developments, where people are sleeping rough, or in front of the reception centre, or you have all these... improvised solutions." (SH9, Belgium)

Similarly, a Polish participant referred to the fact that the *"number of [homeless] people, without Polish citizenship, is growing" (SH7).* Regarding Greece, it was stated:

> "It is worse. It is worse than before. It's not that it never existed, it existed. The situation is getting worse every year." (SH13, Greece)

An exception was Latvia. While one Latvian participant indicated that people who are deported back to Latvia from other EU countries are at risk of homelessness, as are people leaving reception centres, another Latvian participant noted that "*the cases we know of homelessness [among migrants] are actually very few*" (SH11, Latvia). The participant related this to several factors, namely pushbacks at the border which results in low numbers of arrivals, the fact that people who secured protection got help from a mentor to find housing, and thirdly, the fact that people who cannot secure housing move on to other countries. She stated:

> "And it has been the case for many years in Latvia that many people who have received international protection, refugee status, they actually leave after some time to [go to] some other country in Europe. And some

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> of them are sent back if they, you know, have not done it legally, and then they leave again. So this has been the case, …. if they cannot find housing and have multiple issues, they simply leave the country. And they find, in most cases, they find some people they know, or through networks of their, you know, the groups of people that they know, maybe elsewhere in Europe. They leave, and actually, some of the people working in the field have not been able to trace where did they go, and what actually happened with them, but we know that they did not experience homelessness in the homelessness system that much. The cases that we know of homelessness, they are actually very few" (SH11, Latvia)

A similar point was made by a Greek participant who also noted that people without accommodation or living in precarious situations often move out of Greece and onward to other countries. The participant suggested that, as a result of this, homelessness amongst migrants did not get significant attention.

> "I think that when we talk about homelessness in the context of vulnerable groups, especially migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, etc, we have to keep in mind that at least for asylum seekers and refugees, and some migrants, because they leave… the tendencies to leave the country, apart from 2016, ….we haven't seen consequences of homelessness, actually, because people leave. …people are moving, I'm not saying that we don't have homelessness, and it has increased, but it's not such … a visible issue that affects people and say: 'ah, maybe we should discuss about it'." (SH3, Greece)

In addition, there was concern also about the fact that, as highlighted in Chapter 2, there were significant issues with homelessness counts. For example, reference was made by some participants to the fact that often such counts do not include people living in collective centres, even though under the ETHOS LIGHT definition of homelessness, they are considered homeless. A Polish participant referred to this being the case as regards homelessness counts in some provinces, highlighting people from Ukraine:

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> "So, for example, the data from Province A, they collected the information from the collective accommodation centres and centres for foreigners, but the data from Province B, like, did not.... I think this is important because people who live in collective accommodation centres for people from Ukraine, ... they are experiencing homelessness right now, and the risk of street homeless is really high. So we have to collect this data to make the system more, like, more effective to help these people." (SH7, Poland)

A Danish participant also referenced other issues with how counts are conducted, particularly referencing the timing of these, which are often conducted during the winter when there are not as many migrants present:

> "... there is a homeless count every other year. And, ...the count is done, during ... the winter. So there's a lot less EU migrants during the winter than there are during the summer. So that can have an effect" (SH18, Denmark)[12]

Yet it was also acknowledged in the Greek context that while accommodation of some kind is provided to people seeking protection, the majority of international protection applicants in Greece could be considered homeless because of a lack of appropriate housing.

Beyond street homelessness, concern was expressed too about migrants living in poor quality accommodation. Regarding international protection applications, where reception accommodation was provided, concern was expressed by participants about the adequacy of these arrangements and the quality of accommodation provided. One interviewee, who had extensive knowledge of homelessness across Europe, pointed to the inadequacy of existing regulations and the use of *"improvised solutions"*:

> "also in the EU law, it's not very clear what accommodation and housing should be, and then member states come with improvised solutions,

[12] While seasonality is an issue within the counts, it is also important to note that people without legal residency have very limited access to homeless services in Denmark.

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like, they've been putting people on boats, sleeping in hostels." (SH9 Belgium)

A Greek participant made the point that using the ETHOS LIGHT definition of homelessness, essentially all asylum seekers arriving in Greece were considered by this participant to be homeless.

> "So, the first, because there is not a policy of housing, actually everyone, every asylum seeker, when they are entering .... Greece, they are homeless from the first. Because this accommodation, or this, actually, this facilitation, and also these closed control centres, it is not accommodation, it is not housing, actually. It is a kind of, it is not good to call them reception centres, because it is not reception, actually. They are detention centres. Because people are not feeling safe. And they are suffering in these centres, so actually, they remain in a closed centre." (SH4, Greece)

Similar sentiments were expressed by a Polish participant, regarding Ukrainian recipients of temporary protection living in collective accommodation:

> "... when it comes to ETHOS classification, we can, like, of course, ...and we should identify these people as homeless people, because they, like, they don't have ... their ... place to live, where they can [have autonomy]" (SH7 Poland)

Another Greek participant also referred to the inadequate quality of camp accommodation. While the provision of shelter in these camps may mean that a person does not face street level homelessness at the point of arrival, the poor quality can result in people leaving the camps after a period of time, potentially placing them at further risk:

> "... when they first arrive, if they ask for asylum, they are immediately put into a camp. So they don't face a risk of being homeless. ..... It's not the best shelter ... we have people who are, speaking about very bad conditions in the camps. And there is also a situation where you have people who are staying in the camps for a very few months, and then they decide to get out of the camp. They don't know that if they get out

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> of the camp, they will have a problem. And they just leave the camp because they cannot stand the dirt, the food, the situation, so they decide to get out of the camp. When they get out of the camp, there is a possibility that they lose their, their asylum claim.[13] They become irregular." (SH13, Greece)

A Danish participant indicated that although things could always be improved, in general conditions were *"okay"* in reception centres but pointed to *"undignified living conditions"* in centres for rejected asylum seekers or for those being subjected to the Dublin admissibility procedure.

> "…. but for rejected asylum seekers, … and for people in the Dublin admissibility procedure, they have some, some centres with stricter rules, where you don't have the right to cook yourself, so you only get food from the canteen, and the possibilities to move around are limited, and especially at one centre you have to report every day, so you cannot really go visit your family if you have family in other parts of the country. So it's more undignified living conditions that we see as an issue because there is reception offered." (SH17, Denmark)

Regarding migrants more generally, participants also expressed concern about precarious living conditions. A Belgian participant referred to the likelihood that migrants would be *"more at risk of poverty and social exclusion"* and more likely *"to live in deprived and overcrowded accommodation"*. An Irish participant pointed out that due to local authorities "*pushing back because they don't have enough beds*", people are then "*pushed into situations where they could be couch surfing, they're going into illegal tenancies because that's all they can afford, or they're rough sleeping" (SH2,* Ireland). It was noted that in Latvia, although there "*very few cases of homelessness"* among "*work and study"* migrants, the participant was aware of migrants who were living in *"overpopulated apartments"* (SH11, Latvia). Similarly, an Irish participant made reference to the *"multitude of*

[13] Asylum seekers are bound by "the duty of cooperation with the national authorities" of the country where they have applied for asylum, according to which they must be found at their declared address at any time. Not being found at their declared address (i.e. the reception centre where they are officially sheltering), similarly with failing to attend any part of the asylum application procedure, may result in '"express or implied withdrawal of their application" (Agrafioti Chatzigianni et al., 2025, p. 120).

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people on student visas" who are living "*in God knows what accommodation*". A German participant referenced the fact that in the case of migrants "*more and more people are now staying with friends or family in their flats*". Precarious housing situations beyond street homelessness were noted by a Belgian participant also:

> "The most visible ones [living in precarity] will be living in the street. ..... Second one would be, indeed, crowded apartments, where multiple people pool together to pay the rent, and then that is registered on one person, but they all live there together. So that's two. Three will be squats. I think there are multiple unknown squats in Brussels and all over Belgium, where people also try to survive.....And then another, example of precarious housing situations would be... where people know someone in Liege who has a couch or a bed for a few days, and they know someone in Antwerp, so after Liege, they go to Antwerp, and then they stay there, so they really use their network. Which is also something that we hear a lot. And then... another one is volunteering groups or individual volunteers who house people in their own homes..." (SH10, Belgium)

A Greek participant spoke about situations of hidden homelessness, whereby "*refugees and asylum seekers and undocumented persons*" are living "*in apartments, all together, they are not out in the streets*", and expressed concern about the fact that, as a result, such populations are not included in homelessness data (SH14, Greece). It was noted too that, in situations of such precarity, there was a risk of exploitation. This was starkly outlined by a different Greek participant:

> "So,.... we have families who are staying, two families together. There are people who are staying, especially men who are alone, who are staying 3 or 4 people in one apartment, ... because one has the apartment and the others are paying rent there. We have situations where ...there are accusations of people being exploited. Because they cannot find somewhere to sleep, so they are staying ... in an empty squat, ... recently, we had such an incident where someone was keeping their passports

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and they were paying 5 euro per day in order to stay in a house that didn't have even electricity." (SH13, Greece)

4.3.2 The causes of increased risk of homelessness & housing precarity

The causes of increased risk of homelessness and housing precarity among refugees and migrants were discussed at length in the interviews. Drawing on our analysis of the data, in this section we explore five specific themes that help to explain the reason for increased risk of homelessness among this cohort. These are depicted in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Intersecting Structural Causes of Housing Exclusion and Homelessness Among Migrants and Refugees



Overall, the data points to the prevalence of structural level factors in accounting for the increased risk of homeless among refugees and migrants. This was eloquently expressed by one Polish participant:

"I don't think there is something like individual factors to... let someone to become homeless. .... it's always something wider, it's always, like, about some structural ... system problems that people are pushed into [homelessness], and even if we can say, like, if we can talk about some very, like, individual problems, ... like, mental illnesses, or different types of addictions, it always ... works ... in the environment. It, never, like, comes from... I don't know, the air. ... people are not born with these difficulties. The environment creates them." (SH15, Poland)

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It is important to note that there is significant overlap between the themes that are discussed below. While some relate to specific transition points more than others, many of these causes were evident at all transition points. In the following discussion, the transition point at the point of arrival will be referred to as Transition **Point 1**, at the point of changed status as **Transition Point 2** and at the point of family reunification as **Transition Point 3.**

Exclusionary Welfare and Housing Policies and Practices

There was widespread recognition from participants that the lack of affordable housing was the key issue impacting access to housing but that exclusionary policies – including welfare policies, housing policies, reception policies, and broader migration policies – resulted in migrants being particularly impacted. In this section we will discuss the findings regarding welfare and housing policies and practices before then moving on to discuss reception policies and practices.

Across the countries, participants pointed to a lack of supply and high rents, which impacted people across Transition Points 1, 2 and 3. For example, a participant in Greece stated:

> "Rents are going up, we don't have enough new housing. It's extremely expensive because of Airbnb, Golden Visa, etc, and the booming market and tourism of course, hypertourism." (SH3, Greece)

> "Lack of supply in private accommodation is the main [cause of homelessness among migrants]. So, there aren't enough units available to rent, and then… as a knock-on effect of that, units which are available to rent are disproportionately expensive." (SH2, Ireland)

It was the view of participants that a range of factors resulted in migrants being disproportionately impacted by the lack of housing and by high rents. These factors included a myriad of structural issues that interacted with individual factors. Additional factors were difficulties accessing the labour market, being on lower incomes, precarious situations as regards migration status, and discrimination and racism. For example, reflecting the range of structural issues that impact on migrants in the labour market, participants acknowledged that newly arrived migrants - those at **Transition Point 1** - may not have sufficient

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income to be able to secure a rental property. A Belgian participant referred to the likelihood that migrants would be *"more at risk of poverty and social exclusion"* and more likely *"to live in deprived and overcrowded accommodation"*. In a similar vein, an Irish participant referenced the fact that many migrants may not be on higher incomes, thus making it more difficult to find affordable accommodation.

In this context, it was more likely that social security systems were necessary. Different cohorts of migrants have access to different support and rules vary greatly across countries. However, participants were of the view that for many migrants, policies were exclusionary, restricting access to housing and social welfare supports. While both EU and non-EU migrants come from a very broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, including many people who are able to afford high rents, particular concern was expressed for those working in sectors with lower qualification requirements who were likely to be earning less income. Speaking specifically about non-EU migrant workers on work permits for lower paid jobs, one Irish participant expressed the view that they are *"probably struggling a little bit"*. This participant expressed concern about the risk of homelessness among this cohort and among those on student visas, referencing the fact that they are "*kind of out on their own*", alluding to the limited state support available to them if they become homeless:

> "....[t]he thing about them is, if they do become homeless, they're probably not getting access to support. So it's a [strange] one to pin down, because they're kind of out on their own, and they're [going to] have to work out a solution themselves in lots of ways. So... You could... you could probably categorize a lot of people as being high risk. But you might not be able to track that data, you know what I mean, because... They're either not [going to] engage, or if they do, there's not [going to] be... Any real response, you know." (SH6 Ireland)

Similarly, a German participant spoke about some EU citizens in Germany facing exclusion from access to social welfare.

> "...in some cases, EU citizens in Germany are excluded from social benefits, which makes it more risky for them to be homeless. Because the access to social benefits is only possible under specific conditions

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> here. And what's... what we notice, for example, let's say a single mother has to go to work for example, to have access to ... the social welfare system, but the problem is, the childcare timing is not matching. Which means she's at risk of being homeless, and at risk at being excluded, by having no access to work." (SH12, Germany)

Reference was also made by another participant to EU migrants exercising their right of freedom of movement but not evolving their situation following **Transition Point 1** "*in terms of access to rights and entitlements*", thus leading to a refusal to assist from state authorities, even when discretion could be exercised.

Even when precarious migration statuses were regularised, barriers caused by exclusionary policies continued to impact access to housing. For example, a Polish participant stated the following:

> "... when it comes to migrant people, they have to have this, not temporary status, but, they have to ... have permanent protection. .... you can get this permanent protection after 5 years, staying in Poland. So if somebody is 3 years, they cannot be part of this so-called housing... Warsaw Housing First program, because he or she can't apply for ... local social housing, ..." (SH7, Poland)

In particular contexts, specific groups were often identified as being at risk of homelessness and housing precarity. These ranged from large families (identified in Germany) to single parents (noted in relation to Poland) to migrant men (as will be discussed in more detail later). In the Latvian context, although the number of homeless migrants is low, people with disabilities were mentioned as facing particular risks and exclusions:

> "...and the issue that is structural is that in Latvia, you can get disability sort of status. [...] So, but the issue is that they cannot receive disability benefits because, you have to be a resident of Latvia for 5 years in order to receive disability benefits it turns out. And of course, if you have a disability, then finding a job in the sectors without... where you do not know Latvian, it's much more harder." (SH 11 Latvia).

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Migrant women dependent on their spouses' work permits were also noted, with a Belgian participant referring to the particular circumstances of women who are experiencing domestic violence.

> "... the situation of women in particular who are dependent of the permits of the husbands, and they have to put up with, you know, domestic abuse, otherwise they will end up in homelessness." (SH9, Belgium)

Such a scenario could also be relevant after family reunification - **Transition Point 3** - if a relationship breaks down. People arriving through family reunification – whether formal reunification or less formal – also face other risks related to exclusionary policies and practices. A German participant spoke about circumstances in which the family members of EU migrants join them in their housing. This can lead to risks of losing their home in a context where the newly arrived person may not be eligible for social protection:

> "…. when family members from EU migrants are coming and staying with their family in the housing, it's also risky for them to lose the house, because again the rent will be calculated between the persons who are living in it, and often the newly arrived persons are excluded from the rent, and from social systems, so it's difficult for them …." (SH12, Germany)

In the Irish case, it was noted that people who arrived via formal family reunification were sometimes refused housing and homelessness supports from local authorities, instead being referred to the International Protection Accommodation Service, who had no remit for this cohort. An Irish participant stated:

> "...you're seeing local authorities say, well, I'm sure you had a plan when you applied to reunify with your family, so continue with that, because we're not going to place you in emergency accommodation." (SH2, Ireland)

A Belgian participant highlighted that reunified family members hold a temporary permit for the first year but then have to meet certain income and housing criteria after that. He stated:

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> "So, first, there is this stress to accommodate a family upon arrival, but then one year later, the stress returns, because then you need to meet this requirement, and it has to be housing that is suitable to accommodate X amount of persons. So, your small studio will not be considered as suitable. So then it could be that these families then lose their residence permit, because they did not meet the criteria. The sponsor still has their refugee status, of course, but then these family members fall into irregular stay, and they have to look for another way to gather status, which would be the asylum procedure then." (SH10, Belgium)

In the context of not being entitled to welfare or housing supports, 'irregular' migrants were recognised as being at particular risk of homelessness. Irregularity could be evident at **Transition Point 1 -** if someone arrives as an irregular migrant - or someone could become irregular, at **Transition Point 2**, where they perhaps have their application for protection rejected or their visa expires. Participants referred to "*lack of documents*" and "*status*" issues, as being additional risk factors, on top of the general difficulties that many people were facing in the context of limited housing. For example, a Polish participant stated:

> "...migrant people experiencing street homelessness ... have the same problems which Polish people, experiencing homelessness, and this one problem more, which is, lack of documents" (SH7, Poland)

Similarly, an Irish participant stated:

> "We know perfectly well that if someone's immigration status lapses, they're going to lose their job, they're not going to be able to pay their rent. If someone's I.D. runs out, their social welfare payment's going to stop, they're not [going to] be able to pay the rent, so we can, like, look at upstream prevention work."(SH6 Ireland)

Regarding individuals who had been asked to leave the country - again, at **Transition Point 3** - a Danish participant spoke about the specific risks that they faced, again referencing the lack of a safety net at this transition point.

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> "What they're saying is, right now, you don't have a reason to be here, but the thing is, as soon as they get a job, or get money, or... something like that, then they have a right to remain again. .... So... so we will have clients that got the decision from the authorities saying you have to leave by next month, and they're [going to] say, 'I'm not [going to] leave, I'm really not [going to] leave. I might try and hustle, see if I can go and find something to do. Because the alternative is worse for me.' And that's really where you can get a lot of issues. Because the safety net just absolutely crumbles, you're left with... right... a basic right to healthcare. Maybe being allowed in night shelters, but that's not even... not even, certain. And, and then you'll see people yeah, being on the streets. I think, [that is an] interesting transition point, when you are told to leave and you're not going" (SH18 Denmark)

In discussing exclusionary policies, several participants referred to 'policies of deterrence' whereby they believed policies were deliberately trying to make life difficult for migrants in order to push them out of the country or deter them from arriving in the first place. These were the sentiments expressed by a Greek participant who referred to the lack of a national plan on integration and a general policy of deterrence.

> "For asylum seekers, actually, you know, for us, the lack of a national strategy or a national plan on integration. It is one of the main problems. The country has, a kind of policy, a deterrence policy, ... that actually tried to make difficult the life of asylum seekers and refugees, and generally migrants in Greece, in order to push them out of Greece. So that's why it is not that there is not possibility of housing, it is the political willingness, it is the problem that actually. It is a kind of policy that has been chosen and has been implemented for so long years by [the] Greek authorit[ies], in order to send people, to push them out of Greece, and also to send a message to others to not come in Greece." (SH4, Greece)

Notable here is the fact that if the system pushes an international protection applicant out of one country, they may then arrive into irregularity in another

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country, again facing risks at **Transition Point 1**, whereby access to welfare, housing or reception support may be extremely limited.

It was mentioned that in Latvia, unlike other countries, there were not many homeless individuals with a migrant background. However, this was again linked with deterrence policies, specifically pushbacks. The interviewee pointed to the low numbers of homeless migrants being related to the fact that they do not get access to the country in the first place - **Transition Point 1** does not occur.

> "On the border with Belarus ....there is a very specific situation. There are significant attempts to cross the border. However, the strategy is actually to do pushbacks. So, people who might want to claim asylum, they are not given the opportunity in many cases, except if their life might be in danger. So, so yeah, so you have some people who come with this path, but yeah, it's not happening that much." (SH11, Latvia)

Exclusionary Reception Policies and Practices

While in theory, under the Reception Conditions Directive, 'material reception conditions', including accommodation should be available to international protection applicants as soon as they express their desire to relevant officials to apply for international protection, in practice policies and practices vary. In several countries many international protection applicants receive no support at all and thus experience street homelessness/rough sleeping. In other contexts they are only provided with emergency accommodation or very basic facilities. Exclusionary reception policies and practices, particularly at the point of arrival - **Transition Point 1-** but also at later points, were evident across several countries.

This was a particularly pertinent theme in the Irish and Belgian contexts, where failures to provide adequate reception conditions are very well documented, as discussed in Chapter 3. Regarding Belgium, one participant stated:

> "We have seen asylum seekers very much being excluded. We have seen Belgium coming up with waiting lists in the reception centres, where they give people a paper saying, 'you are entitled to a spot in our

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> accommodation centre, but we don't have one now, so we will call you when one becomes available'. ...." (SH9, Belgium)

Similarly, an Irish participant referred to men who applied for international protection not being accommodated upon arrival:

> "... there was an entire demographic of people who were, you know, they may have already experienced homelessness on their journey before they arrived in the state, but then, like, they were beginning this new chapter of their time in Ireland by being homeless." (SH2, Ireland)

Another Belgian participant noted that homelessness among newly arrived asylum seekers, particularly men, had become "*a normal part of [their] trajectory*" in Belgium. The length of time people wait for reception accommodation varies, but can amount to several weeks or even months. This participant referred to men in this situation being *"left to their own devices"*:

> "And during this waiting time they are left to their own devices. So either they end up on the streets, in squats, or among family and friends, which is often also very precarious housing situations. So this has become a normal part, you could say, of the reception network for single men." (SH10, Belgium)

The failure of Belgium to accommodate people, despite multiple court rulings indicating that this must occur, was a source of particular frustration:

> "The authorities are just willingly ignoring the decisions of the court. Which, you know, then raises issues of what is happening with the rule of law, and what is happening, like, how can you...advocate for rights in a context where the decisions from the courts are being ignored." (SH9, Belgium)

While states officially explained the non-provision of reception accommodation as being because of a lack of capacity, some participants saw it differently. Policies of deterrence were again referenced with participants expressing the view that homelessness by default upon arrival was part of a state's efforts to deter people from entering the country. Within the Irish context, it was recognised that the situation had improved somewhat, with people being offered accommodation

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within a few days of arrival. However, this was still considered to be *"a method of deterrence":*

> "I mean, to me, it comes across as like, method of deterrence as well, you know. Probably not as harsh as it would have been, you know, two to three years ago, but, like you would assume that it's still filtering out through networks. Like, well, 'if you go to Ireland and you apply for international protection, you're not going to be accommodated for at least a couple of days.' " (SH2, Ireland)

Participants also referred to more direct efforts to exclude people from asylum accommodation. For example, one of the Belgian experts, recounted the repeated efforts of the Belgian government to exclude individuals from international protection accommodation when they had obtained protection elsewhere. While ultimately the legality of this Belgian policy was contested when it was suspended by both the Council of State and the Constitutional Court, it evidences efforts to "*refuse legally*" certain groups, thus further curtailing access to the reception facilities at **Transition Point 1:**

> "... you see that the government also introduces new legal grounds to refuse new groups accommodation, where there is the assessment that there is too many asylum seekers who already obtained international protection in another EU member state, mostly Greece, who then travel onwards to Belgium, apply for asylum here again, and then this government introduced a law change allowing for Fedasil to refuse accommodation to these persons as well. So then they... do some sort of transition from... being in Greece, coming to Belgium. And ending up on the streets here as well. However, this particular law change has been suspended by our Constitutional Court last week. But you see that the government constantly experiments with ways to refuse legally then new groups of asylum seekers". (SH10, Belgium)

Where lack of access to reception conditions was an issue – particularly in Ireland and Belgium - it was generally the case that this was more likely to be the case for men than for women. This was related to men being considered 'non vulnerable'. There was concern though of shifting discourses around vulnerability and non-

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vulnerability as states attempted to further restrict access to reception accommodation. Some participants gave examples of other groups also being excluded, suggesting further slippages in standards and *'red lines'*. A participant in Belgium stated:

> "... what is clear is there was a kind of a red line in the asylum system to say, okay, women and children will never be on the street. That red line has been passed a thousand times, and every day we see it on the streets. So that red line with no kids on the street, that is no longer the truth" (SH1, Belgium)

In terms of whether reception policies were exclusionary or not, the nationality of the arriving person was also of relevance, particularly as regards people from Ukraine versus people from other countries. As discussed in Chapter 1, people fleeing Ukraine are generally in receipt of temporary protection which usually affords different rights and entitlements. A Greek participant referred to the '*double standard*' regarding reception for people from Ukraine compared with others:

> "... when Ukrainians, they arrive as asylum seekers at the European territory, in Greece, suddenly they have a kind of program of protection, including housing. But it is not happening for other refugees, which is really problematic. So it is a kind of double standard, which we see, a kind of double standard [in relation to] asylum seekers and refugees." (SH4, Greece)

However, there was evidence from interviews of increasingly restrictive approaches to the reception of both international protection applicants generally and in relation to those in receipt of temporary protection from Ukraine. One Belgian participant referred to the fact that "*the enthusiasm and solidarity for Ukrainians has decreased at government level and societal level", (SH10)* resulting in it being very hard for temporary protection holders to secure housing. Another participant referred to the growing population of migrants who are homeless, highlighting policy changes made by the Polish government in respect of Ukrainians. She stated:

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> "The Polish government changes the law about helping Ukrainian refugees every, like, half a year. And they change it, like, every, every half a year, they change it, like, ... into the worst, worst conditions. Yeah. So, for instance, like, every half a year, ... they reduce the group of people who is... allowed to live in those collective accommodation centres." (SH15, Poland)

This was again related to discourses and perceptions of vulnerability, whereby policy makers regularly changed the criteria regarding which Ukrainians were considered vulnerable (enough) to receive accommodation at **Transition Point 1.**

In terms of not accessing reception centres upon arrival, the situation of unaccompanied minors was also highlighted by several interviewees. While generally accommodated in specific centres for children, often within the child welfare system, and thus not subjected to exclusionary reception policies, there were still risks, as discussed previously in Chapter 3. Reference was made to risks of homelessness associated with age disputes, where a young person's age is not accepted by the authorities at **Transition Point 1**, to risks at **Transition Point 2** when the status of unaccompanied minors changes from that of child to adult and when they have to leave dedicated centres for minors as a result. Reference was also made to risks in relation to young people who don't enter the reception system upon arrival for various reasons. Regarding the latter, restrictive policies relating to secondary movement are relevant here, whereby - as discussed in Chapter 1 - the first country of entry of an asylum seeker is responsible for their asylum claim and asylum seekers are not supposed to engage in onward movement to another EU member state while their claim is being processed. However, the first country of entry may not be where a young person wishes to make their claim:

> "Unaccompanied minors have been also a group which are at [growing] risk of homelessness or facing homelessness. And here, specifically for Belgium and France, there is a group of unaccompanied minors, which are referred to as 'minors in transit'. ... some of them... have as a final goal to go to the UK. But there is movement back and forth, because they don't know what to do yet, you know, they're young people, young men

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> mostly, but also some girls, who are deciding what to do and trying to figure out where to apply for asylum, so they don't have an asylum application, but... they're moving around, and while they do that, of course, they don't have a secure place to live in." (SH9, Belgium)

For people seeking international protection, those who engaged in '*secondary movement*' were at risk of being excluded from reception accommodation. Indeed, as indicated in Chapter 1, under the Pact, if asylum seekers move on from the first country of arrival, they will not be entitled to full reception conditions. A Greek participant also referenced the challenges faced by people engaging in secondary movement and questioned whether people are really given a proper chance in Greece, given the precarious conditions under which they live:

> "It's increasingly complicated to leave Greece and go to another country, because the chances are that you are going to be returned, or you will not be accepted to file another asylum claim, or you're going to be living in precarity because you will not have documents, etc. I think it's a combination of financial and administrative obstacles. But also the lack of... assurances that you have a future here. ... people are... feeling... that all of their reality is very precarious, but they need to find something more stable, and they cannot find it in Greece, because the opportunity is not offered. The main argument is people do not want to stay in Greece, they want to go to Germany. The counterargument is, have we ever given them the opportunity to stay in Greece and then evaluate it?" (SH3, Greece)

Similarly, a Danish participant who indicated that access to reception was not *"a big problem",* referenced people moving to Denmark via secondary movement. He highlighted how some asylum seekers came to Denmark from another country where they were homeless after their claims were rejected or because they were being put through the Dublin procedure:

> "…. we would see many rejected asylum seekers coming from Sweden to Denmark, because they are living in the streets, and they don't want to cooperate on the return. Whereas here, you go to a return centre with

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not good conditions, necessarily, but, but it is... you have a place to stay." (SH17, Denmark)

A Latvian participant spoke about secondary movement and returns, outlining how people may try to leave Latvia for other countries and then be deported back to Latvia, at which point they have limited or no access to social protection benefits or services:

> "...it's the worst....case, because when they are deported back, nobody cares anymore about them. Because when they're at open camp ... they're running away to other countries. When they are running away from that open camp, they are losing all their chances to get back in that open camp. And when they are deported... Yes, and that's why they are on the streets. Just night shelter." (SH19, Latvia)

Like Denmark, lack of access to reception accommodation at **Transition Point 1** was not considered to be an issue in Latvia. However, as noted earlier, this was attributed largely to pushbacks at the border. Importantly, this suggests that the absence of homelessness at the point of arrival may hide significant human rights issues, such as the lack of access to an asylum procedure in the first place.

Reflecting Greece's position as an arrival point and the country's long-standing struggles to provide adequate reception, Greek participants were particularly critical of the quality of reception accommodation. One Greek participant spoke about what they referred to as *"bad practice and worst practice",* referencing the inhuman conditions within detention centres but acknowledging that these centres were better than having no accommodation at all:

> "We have bad practice and worst practice. The bad practice is that when you have this closed control centre, you are entering. It means that you have something to enter, and you are there, you are not on the street, so it is something. But it is not housing. But you are not feeling safe. It is really, inhuman condition in [these facilities] in these so-called reception centres. But it is a better practice than the worst one, which is if you have nothing. So, it is... it is always, we say, most of the time, people say, you are happy that you are in such a centre." (SH4 Greece)

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Exclusionary Bureaucracy

Exclusionary bureaucracy also served as a significant barrier to securing housing across **Transition Points 1, 2 and 3.** Even when supports were available to address the lack of affordable housing, complex systems acted as barriers, sometimes effectively excluding people from exercising their rights. The complicated nature of systems was noted by participants, with reference made to the added challenges faced by migrants in navigating these systems with limited support. For example, a Belgian participant stated:

> "the whole complexity of the system is coming up, because even for mobile EU citizens there are many conditions to be fulfilled, there... is... also different ways in which EU law is implemented at national level, and... depending on the work that they've been doing, the stage where they are in their, arrival period, like, if they're still looking for a job, or if they had a job and now they're unemployed, then it's a whole web" (SH9, Belgium)

Reflecting this characterisation of the system as *"a whole web"*, a Greek participant referred to the *"bureaucratic labyrinth"* facing people in Greece seeking to rent a property, whether migrants or Greeks.

> "[Migrants] don't have a lot of prerequisites for renting a house. Such as having a bank account, which, in order to have a bank account, you need to have an [Tax Identification Number] and a [Social Security Number], and you need to have a job contract, and also you need to have a house. To prove that you are renting somewhere, so there is this bureaucratic labyrinth of the Greek state, which is not only for migrants, it's also for the Greek citizens, that sometimes you get in front of a wall and you cannot do anything." (SH13, Greece)

Bureaucratic difficulties entering the labour market were identified by one Danish expert. He identified a 'catch-22' kind of situation facing EU migrants. This involved the requirement to have an address in order to register but not being able to get an address without having a job.

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> "... you're not able to register and get your EU citizen registration, proving that you are a worker, or you are applying for work, if you don't have an address. And that's obviously a really big issue, because ... some companies, they require you to have a CPR number, which you only get when you register an address and actually officially move to Denmark. And you can see the issue here. So you can't get the job before you get housing, but you can't get housing before you get a job." (SH18, Denmark)

There was recognition too that the difficulties of navigating complex systems in order to secure housing or housing supports were further compounded by a range of individual factors. In particular, language barriers and discrimination were identified as issues. Often information was not available in other languages. Within the Irish context, a participant highlighted the challenges the system created for the Roma population in the context of language barriers and racism experienced by that group. The participants' comments also referred to a concern about lack of knowledge among people implementing the system, a point that will be returned to later.

> "... people who are Roma may well be lawfully resident in Ireland, but if you create a system whereby, when you present for homeless accommodation, and you have language barriers, and you potentially have racism towards this group, that you're also going, 'show us your payslips, show us proof that you're allowed to be here, or else you and your kids are sleeping on the street tonight.' That you're just going to have persons left sleeping on the street, including children. And they are hidden homeless. I think it speaks to the fact that the persons responsible for drafting are not familiar with the distinction between the habitual residency criteria and EU free movement, which are two very different things. And specifically, the habitual residency criteria is not allowed to be applied to persons who are EU workers." (SH20, Ireland)

Similarly, a German participant acknowledged that language barriers can be a problem when trying to find housing but emphasised the need for structural level solutions to address this, such as language courses with a sufficient number of

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places and that are appropriately funded. Certain individual characteristics facilitated some migrants to be able to succeed in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles to enable them to secure housing despite the multiple challenges. For example, one Belgian participant pointed to the importance of networks, communication, assertiveness and creativity in securing a place to live, sometimes via volunteer groups:

> "... within the group of people in irregular stay, I think, generally speaking, just those who don't have any network, who have issues with, verbal communication, who are highly vulnerable because of this or other reasons, they have more risks to sleep rough, because those who are creative, who are assertive, who have a network, who do reach out to volunteers that they meet, they can get accommodation, which will still be precarious, but at least a roof over their heads, with volunteering groups, with humanitarian shelters, but those who don't have these capabilities, they will also be left on the streets." (SH10, Belgium)

In the Irish context, there was an example given of apparent bureaucratic wranglings between the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) and local authorities in relation to people who secured protection. At this point - **Transition Point 2** - the policy of IPAS was to move people to different IPAS centres, if they had not moved out of their original centre within a few months of getting status. These centres were usually of a lower quality as reception conditions obligations no longer applied. Due to this, the local authorities were instructed by another government agency not to grant access to emergency homeless accommodation to protection holders as it was considered that they all "*had somewhere else to reside*". The participant considered this to be "*wholly unlawful*" (SH20, Ireland). It was the clear view of another participant that the responsibility lay with the local authority, not IPAS:

> "IPAS, legally, they're not... just like they're not responsible for people who have a deportation order. They're not at that far end of the scale. Neither are they legally responsible to accommodate people with their residence permission. So, the competent authority in terms of

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> emergency homelessness and social housing supports are local authorities." (SH5, Ireland)

Exclusionary Beliefs and Practices: Racism and Discrimination

Across the interviews, discrimination and racism were raised as very significant issues impacting access to housing for refugees and migrants. They were relevant to **Transition Point 1, Transition Point 2** and **Transition Point 3**. Many of the interviewees referenced the fact that racism and discrimination were becoming a growing issue, taking place within a context of rising anti-refugee and anti-migrant sentiment in many countries.

Racism and discrimination were spoken about in stark terms. One participant referred to *"very scary scenes… with anti-migrant demonstrations, attacks on hotels… becoming more and more" (SH9, Belgium).* Referencing the fact that migrants are "*competing for the same houses as the Belgian population"*, another participant indicated that they are "*often met with either implicit or explicit racism, which is a well-known fact that it exists in the housing market" (SH10, Belgium).* Similarly, a Latvian participant simply stated that *"many people do not want to rent apartments to foreigners",* adding that *"we are not such a warm, welcoming country for foreigners"* (SH19 Latvia). Reference was made also to the fact that when seeking accommodation, if migrants had the assistance of a white person, they were more likely to secure it. Discrimination and racism was considered to be happening at a structural or institutional level and at an individual level. When talking about what leads to homelessness among EU migrants, a German participant stated:

> "The main reason first of all is discrimination. Either discrimination on an individual basis and also a structural basis, because in some cases, EU migrants are excluded from the social benefits or social support. Then individually they're discriminated on the housing market, too, from landlords who are not accepting them." (SH12, Germany)

Indeed, discrimination from landlords in the private rental market was emphasised in many of the interviews. Participants spoke about how it resulted in refusals to rent properties to migrants and refugees or how it resulted in higher rents for this

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group. A Polish participant stated "*foreigners*" are *"in this group, [whom landlords don't want to rent to], so if they want to live somewhere, this living costs more" (SH8, Poland).* Participants were of the view that discrimination often occurred based on people's names or their skin colour:

> "People get discriminated by landlords because they see your surname, and then they, they don't even... give you the possibility to take a look at the apartment. They... they don't even invite you, or they don't even answer you" (SH16, Germany)

Similarly, a Greek participant also referred to discrimination experienced by people with names that "*seem foreign*".

> "Of course, for migrants and refugees, you have also issues that have to do with racism. We have a number of lived experiences or examples where people refuse to rent out their apartment because the name seems foreign." (SH3, Greece)

Regarding skin colour, participants referenced the fact that people who were perceived not to look like the national population were discriminated against. In the context of a shortage of affordable housing, as discussed previously, a German participant was of the view that when landlords have multiple applicants for their properties *"it's rare that they choose people who may not look like the typical German person*" (SH12, Germany). Similar sentiments were expressed in other interviews, including by a Polish participant who referenced both skin colour and religion, as follows:

> "But, another mechanisms, which can lead to homelessness, ... [is] when you are a foreigner which looks differently in Polish culture. I mean, you are just black-skinned, or even not black-black, but, you know, not white. Yes. It's also a risk. They were the cases that were NGO people who was trying to find people just to rent a house, rent a flat somewhere in the city. They were just calling to the person, and the organized meeting, and when the person looked that there was a woman, for example, in Burka, you know, or something. This person said, 'the flat is not for renting.' 'Or I will not rent for her, or something like that.' Just like that,

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> from the first sentence, it was, even without any checking, you know, how much it will be cost, or something like that." (SH8, Poland)

A Greek participant referred to the range of structural constraints - including difficulties securing jobs, barriers posed by residence permit rules, lack of information - that made access to housing difficult for migrants. In addition, she referred to the xenophobic discourse that, in her view, is getting worse every year and discussed "*the racism factor*" as leading to homelessness. She indicated that for people with racialised backgrounds, even if they were in Greece for 20 or 30 years, they would struggle to find a rental property *"because the landlords are racist and they don't rent them to black people"*. She gave a specific example.

> "I have a specific case of a person, from [a West African Country], who was trying to find a house for two and a half years to rent, a person who had money, who was working, and he couldn't find a place to stay, … he knows Greek. So he was speaking in Greek, so when he went to see the house, the landlords were telling him that they have rented it. And this cannot be, this is pure racism." (SH13, Greece)

Given the diversity within migrant and refugee cohorts, there was recognition that some individuals and groups were more likely to experience racism and discrimination than others. For example, the risk of discrimination – at both a structural and individual level - against single men who are asylum seekers was mentioned frequently, particularly in the Irish, Greek and Belgian contexts. A Greek participant spoke about such men being "*heavily discriminated against.. just because they are single men"*. She referenced not only gender but also other intersecting aspects of identity, including nationality, migration status and religion whilst also highlighting the situation of unaccompanied minors who *"become, in a day…. single men":*

> "… single men, asylum seekers, I mean, they suffer because they're probably the most discriminated group. They are deemed a security threat, you know, we use them to put fear in the discussion, etc. So, I think that single men suffer, whatever the nationality. EU citizens, not so much, because they have the right of movement…. Of course, colour plays a role, also, religion plays a role. ….. Certain nationalities also suffer,

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> I mean, it's one thing to be someone who is from Syria, at least until now, or very recently, and it's another thing to be from Pakistan or Afghanistan or Sudan.....And this... in this category, you have also the unaccompanied minors who become of age, 18+. Because, in a day, they become single men." (SH3, Greece)

The same participant situated these experiences within the context of a policy vacuum and a toxic public discourse:

> "... I would say that the lack of policy allows racism to ... to grow. And the narrative, that very toxic narrative that we are facing basically, allows, I mean ... targets a lot of people." (SH3, Greece)

Regarding nationality, there was recognition that people arriving from Ukraine – who are predominately white - experienced better support than those fleeing conflict and persecution from other regions. This was viewed as a form of discrimination against other groups, with people from Ukraine experiencing preferential treatment. Yet, there was recognition too that not all of those who fled from Ukraine benefitted from this. In particular, the Roma population who fled Ukraine were identified as being at risk of discrimination and racism, maintaining in exile their minority and disadvantaged positionality. A Belgian participant who had extensive knowledge of homelessness across Europe, referred to examples of *"cherry picking*" whereby acts of solidarity from members of the public towards people fleeing from Ukraine did not extend towards the Roma population. A Polish participant referred to this also, stating:

> "When it was the huge scale [invasion], when Polish people, they were helping the Ukrainians, they didn't want ... to help Roma people." (SH8, Poland)

In addition, in the Irish context, it was suggested that state organisations were suspicious of the Roma population. One participant stated:

> "...we know through our work with other services that Roma clients face big difficulties, and face massive suspicion as well, when they apply for social housing support." (SH20, Ireland)

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Other examples were also given of racism and discrimination within state services. A Danish participant spoke of legal requirements for owners of shelters to ensure they were not housing a person who didn't have a right to be in the country, leading them to deny migrants access to such services, particularly in the context where migrants may not know their rights. This could be viewed as a form of structural discrimination:

> "But some of them, especially those that are owned by the municipality, ….they'll say, 'well, we don't really want to risk it. It's… really easiest for us to deny you. You're not going to know your rights, you're not going to ask for a written decision, you're not going to complain.'…. So that, I think, in my opinion, is the most vulnerable period for an EU migrant, especially, is that [if] you want to go and work in Denmark, but you are too vulnerable to have a job ready and housing ready before you come" (SH18, Denmark)

In the Irish context, several participants were critical of local authority housing and homeless teams. One participant referred to the fact that people may be working on a housing team but have no particular interest in migrant groups. They may lack prior knowledge and experience of working with certain groups and also have both "*hidden biases*" and more "*actively racist ideas*"

> "So, it could just be lack of exposure, you know, like, somebody working in a local authority [in a rural area] might never have met somebody from Somalia before, so… It's all new to them. They might have, … a hidden bias, which they've just never had reason to kind of sit down and think about before. And then there can be, like, more active biases as well, which… could come out of, like, … actively racist ideas. I think it can also be born out of pressure and burnout as well. It's not easy to have to be telling people 'no' and turning people away into situations where they could potentially be rough sleeping, you know." (SH2, Ireland)

Relatedly, another Irish participant referenced what he believed to be racist questions directed towards people of migrant background seeking housing support. His contention that there are *"no repercussions"* for such behaviour points to institutional racism.

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> "I think that there is an inherent attempt to keep social housing lists short on the part of local authorities, and we have experienced overt racism. 'Why do we have to have responsibility for them? Can't they go back where they have come from?' etc. being said, and being put in writing by local authority staff who face no repercussions or reprimand for that behaviour, whatsoever." (SH20, Ireland)

The same participant referred to local authorities not interpreting regulations appropriately, resulting in migrants not getting access to services. He questions whether they "*fundamentally misunderstand*" or "*choose to misunderstand*" such provisions.

Exclusionary Support Structures

In most countries, there was concern about the level of support available to people of migrant background as they attempted to secure adequate housing for themselves. This lack of support was framed in the context of the multiple challenges and barriers faced by these groups, as discussed above. In most countries insufficient support was evident at all points of transition. The support at the point of arrival **- Transition Point 1 -** and the point of changed status - **Transition Point 2** - were discussed more than support at the point of family reunification - **Transition Point 3** - again perhaps reflecting increasingly restrictive family reunification policies in many countries.

The data suggest that the level of support available differs from country to country and of course from location to location within countries. It also changes over time and there may be different supports available to people in different migration situations. For example, as noted earlier, in countries that are failing to provide reception accommodation upon arrival, often people are "*left to their own devices*" or simply signposted to basic supports, such as services that can provide access to showers or food.

Regarding within-country differences, often support services are concentrated in urban areas, with rural locations having fewer services. A Greek participant referred to this:

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> "... in Athens, ...people can find help through the civil society organizations. But outside of Athens, they cannot. So, this is also an issue. .... Because most of the people are coming to Athens, because most of the organizations are in Athens, so most of the... The help that they can find, from the... civil society organizations is in the big cities, so it's either Athens or Thessaloniki. Where they're trying to... find a way of being included in the society. So ... first thing that... I might see as a barrier is ... the transit from the camp to somewhere else. It is also one of the reasons why people decide to leave from the camps. Because I cannot find anything close to the camps, there is nothing close to Ritsona camp, for example, or in Malakasa camp. Nothing close. Civil society organizations cannot get inside, they cannot provide help. So people are... trying ... to leave. So the transition from a camp, especially when they are outside of the big cities, to the centre of the big cities is a difficulty." (SH13; Greece)

Given this urban / rural divide in terms of supports and services, at **Transition Point 2,** where people secure refugee status or have their claim rejected, the tendency is to move to urban areas. This was identified not only in Greece but in Poland also. Often, of course, within the larger cities, both the demand for housing and the cost of housing are higher

The need for support at the point where people move out of accommodation for international protection applicants was highlighted in many of the interviews. To begin with, it was recognised too that the limited supports that might be available in collective centres for international protection applicants or Ukrainian refugees were usually no longer accessible upon leaving. These included the informal networks of support between residents. One participant in Poland referenced the multiple barriers making it difficult for Ukrainian women to access work upon leaving collective centres, emphasising that "*it's rather not ... that those mothers are incapable*" but instead that they face multiple barriers within the system, including a lack of childcare, with informal networks no longer available:

> "It's also this thing that in these collective accommodation centres, you have, like, a bunch of families around you, and if you go to work, there will be someone to take care of your kid, yeah? But if you, like, live on

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> your own, there is no, like, mother of yours, or your grandmother, or whoever, like, any aunt, your sister, whoever. Then, like, you cannot just easily, like, go to work on.... different shifts, because, yeah, you have to always have in mind that, okay, there are kids, like, I have to take care of them. If I leave them alone at home, they will, like, the state will take them away from me, so..." (SH15, Poland)

There were often significant gaps in knowledge regarding the local context among migrants and people of refugee background, as well as language challenges. While this might be considered most relevant to the **Transition Point 1,** it is also relevant at the later points - **Transition Point 2 and 3.** For example, people who have secured status, even if they had been in the country for a significant period, may have little knowledge of the local rental market or of housing rights and entitlements and may not speak the local language. It is important to note that, as discussed in Chapter 3, this largely reflects the nature of the reception system, which usually does not easily facilitate integration. Indeed, the way in which reception facilities are organised may actively hinder integration, leaving people with significant knowledge and information gaps, even after lengthy periods in the country in question. These gaps may still be evident when family members have joined them via family reunification, at point at which they may need to assist their family members to navigate multiple systems. In addition, their existing knowledge may be specific to a particular geographic location, but they may move to a new location upon receiving status, such as from a rural to urban location as noted above. A Greek participant stated:

> "And then when they arrive, when they finally arrive, there is lack of information, lack of correct information. They don't know what they need to have in order to rent a place. They don't know what they need to have in order to start a job. And, besides all this, the fact that they are in a big city is also a problem" (SH13, Greece)

It was noted that in Denmark people who secured refugee status were generally provided with housing and support from the municipality, according to one participant. However, even there, issues had started to emerge with a lack of housing, thus resulting in a lower standard of housing.

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One Polish participant pointed to the fact that, in her view, males were particularly lacking in support, referring to the fact that others might garner *'pity'* and thus be supported whereas it was different for men. This points to a lack of proper system of support, with more reliance on ad hoc arrangements:

> "…. male refugees between their, like, 20s and 40s, and…like, we have some help for, like, those families with kids, elderlies, people with disabilities … And there will be, like, always someone from the city hall to, like, feel pity for them and look for some help. But for this group of, like, male refugees who are, like, in this, like, productive age, …. when you get your decision about the international protection in Poland… basically, like, you have just… sometimes, couple of weeks, sometimes, couple of days to leave the either open centre, like the camp, or the detention centre. And basically, like, you have nothing. You just get, like, some…small amount of money to get on your own, but it's not really… we cannot even compare it to the minimal wages … which is already pretty poor, but yeah, like, it's basically nothing" (SH15, Poland)

A Latvian participant spoke about people receiving their residence documents at **Transition Point 2** and having to leave the centres where they were staying. She highlighted this as a stressful situation, particularly if language competence was an issue and if they had not found work. Limited support was available from a social worker who could assist them to find homeless accommodation:

> "Yes, and this is a very stressful situation if person haven't improved language skills, haven't found the work. Yes, he is on the street, and the social worker just help him to find if it's women, for women's shelter, if it's family, for, like, crisis… crisis centres, you know? If men, it's a night shelter. Yes, options, usually it's like that. No other help, it's like that." (SH19, Latvia)

Regarding support following family reunification - **Transition Point 3** - a Greek participant stated:

> "There is family reunification in Greece. It happens, it's very slow, and it's very complicated. But there is no… there is nothing that is offered to

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> people who are, you know, bringing their family in. There's no housing, there's nothing." (SH3, Greece)

While insufficient support was an issue across the transition points, concerns were also expressed about the *quality* and accessibility of support services. Digital platforms were noted as sometimes being difficult for migrants to navigate, with an Irish participant referencing the *"digital divide"* and lack of customer services to accompany digital platforms (SH5, Ireland). Language barriers in accessing available supports were also discussed, with many participants referencing the fact that interpretation or translation services were not available, thus making services inaccessible to many, essentially amounting to a form of institutional discrimination. A Greek participant referred to the lack of interpretation services as "*a common and main challenge in the city of Athens.*" In keeping with the earlier discussion about the complexity of many systems, a Polish participant referenced the "*very unfriendly system*" encountered by migrants and refuges. Speaking about their interactions with the office of the *Voivode*[14], she stated:

> "And if you go there, like, all of it is just designed, like, architecturally designed in this way, that it's so unfriendly, like, if you don't know the language, like, you get no clue, like, you don't know what to do, like...Like, ...when you go as a Pole to, I don't know, apply for the new ID, and it's so easy, like, you always have someone to ask .... a question, where to go, like, what to do. And you just, like, go with it within a few minutes, and then...you are a foreigner going to this Voivode office. And it's so complicated, like... it's not even structured in the same way, you don't have the same things placed on the same place, you know? Like, this information here, and this information there. Like ... additionally, you have to, like, look for everything, and there is no one... no one to ask, and no one, of course, to ask in other language than Polish" (SH15, Poland)

Her belief was that the system was constructed in this way *"on purpose"* to *"push you to resign from trying"* or to cause you to give him.

[14] A Voivodeship in Poland is equivalent to a province in many other countries.

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In addition, regarding the quality of services, several participants pointed to the lack of knowledge and skill among local authority / municipality staff as regards working with people of migrant and refugee background, something that was again relevant across **Transition Points 1, 2 and 3.** Among the issues highlighted were lack of knowledge of immigration/asylum law and associated rights as regards housing, and a lack of understanding of how to work with cultural groups, in a culturally conscious way. One Irish participant referred to lack of knowledge among local authority staff about what migrants are entitled to and gave examples of lawfully resident migrants being told they did not have an entitlement to homeless services when in fact they did. Similarly the fact that people working in local authorities can be working in one section one week and then in the homelessness section the following week was raised. The suggestion was that they had a lack of training and expertise in their specific area of work.

> "There's a skills issue, both on the homelessness side and on the social housing side. .... what can happen to someone in the local authority is, you're working in... in [the planning section] on Friday, and you move to the homeless section on Monday. And that's it. And the only training you're [going to] get is what your colleagues know, which in turn, they may have never had any training." (SH5, Ireland)

Similarly, a Belgian participant referred to the lack of knowledge from the authorities about free movement legislation, resulting in a lack of understanding of people's rights, perhaps particularly impacting migrants at **Transition Point 1**. A Polish participant also commented on lack of knowledge among some municipality staff:

> "There are some NGOs who are working with migrants, and they are really very smart with those legal regulations. But just people who work in offices, they really don't. And also, there are not so many, well, in not every municipality, they are people who are not trained how to work with migrants, with a cultural context, or just, I don't know, language context." (SH8, Poland)

Finally, reference was also made to migrants, particularly those who were undocumented, not seeking support because of concern that their

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undocumented status would become an issue. One participant referenced a study by PICUM and FEANTSA[15] which found that in 12 countries public shelters were required to *"do checks on the administrative status of people"* accessing their services. The participant stated that "*you don't want to go there if that is the case" (SH9, Belgium).* Similarly, as referred to previously under the *Exclusionary Beliefs and Practices* section, a Danish participant referenced the requirement of providers to contact the immigration authorities to determine if a person was in the country legally. This participant was of the view that in some cases a person's status is unclear – for example where an EU migrant has arrived recently (**Transition Point 1**) but has not registered. While some municipalities will provide the service anyway, others will not, as they *"don't really want to risk"* providing a service to someone who may be irregular for fear of funding implications. As a result, there is a risk that in these situations they will deny the person the service, particularly in a context where the person is unlikely to know their rights.

Political discourse was seen to contribute to this fear of seeking support. A Belgian participant referred to the messaging from the Belgian government and the impact that this had on migrants, possibly leading to migrants not looking for support:

> "The whole political context also doesn't help, because more and more, we see these policies which are trying to create fear among migrants, telling people, don't come. Our minister here again had a whole campaign last year where they just made videos posting on social medias, media saying, 'don't come to Belgium, we are full. You have nothing to look for here'... so it's this deterrent factor and the fear among general migrants, but of course particularly undocumented migrants, that... If you say something, if you need help, you will be reported or arrested. And I think this is becoming more and more the context." (SH9, Belgium).

[15] The participant is referring to Mylona et al.'s (2025) report.

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Fear of seeking support is likely to be an even greater issue in the context of support and solidarity initiatives being under threat. One Greek participant spoke about the "criminalisation of solidarity" and its dehumanising impact:

> "And of course, with the new law that is coming from the European Union, this is also going to be illegal most of the times, because hosting someone who might be irregular, or helping someone in need, according to the new Deportation Directive, is going to create issues for the people who are helping. [...] It's criminalizing solidarity, it's criminalizing migration, and it's also dehumanizing migrants altogether." (SH13, Greece)

Where state services were feared, trusted NGOs are likely to be of particular importance. One participant suggested that these services are usually heard about via word of mouth amongst migrants:

> "....people hear about the available support. I think one of the main ways in which people get information is from mouth to mouth, hanging out in the city centre, or the train stations, the most popular locations, and then they will hear about the different services, and yeah, I think that the NGO, including here the homelessness sector, is where they end up primarily for... for asking for support, or... you know, organizations like the Red Cross have programs and this is where people go most of the time. Of course, through these services, like there will be counselling, for people to get access to the general services." (SH9, Belgium)

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to address the significant gaps in our knowledge that exist in relation to the causes of homelessness and housing precarity among refugees and migrants, recognising that more extensive knowledge in this regard is needed if solutions to this issue are to be identified and effectively implemented. Building on the review of literature in relation to key transition points at which the risk of homelessness increases, and on the analysis of quantitative data evidencing the over-representation of refugees and migrants in homelessness statistics, this chapter explores in detail the perspectives of key professionals working in the

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migration and homelessness sectors across seven different European countries. In doing so, it sheds light on five key causes of homelessness and housing precarity among these cohorts, namely exclusionary welfare and housing policies and practices; exclusionary reception policies and practices; exclusionary bureaucracy; exclusionary beliefs and practice: racism and discrimination; and exclusionary support structures. Together, these primarily structural factors intersect with one another and serve as barriers which exclude many migrants and refugees from accessing adequate housing

It is important to note that there is significant overlap between these themes and that, while some relate to specific transition points more than others, many of these causes were evident at all transition points: the point of arrival in a country; the point of changed migration status and the point of family reunification. While of course individual level factors such as one's ability to form social networks, language capacity, level of trauma, mental health difficulties, and addictions, are likely to have a significant role to play in one's ability to access housing, our data clearly highlight that the factors of most relevance are structural level factors, situated within national and European contexts that have become increasingly hostile towards migrants and refugees. Of particular concern is the emphasis placed by participants on racism and discrimination as key factors impacting housing outcomes. The chapter also suggests that the ongoing deterrence approach that many states are adopting may increase vulnerability to homelessness amongst migrants.

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Chapter 5: Concluding Comments and Next Steps

This report had a dual aspiration: first, to examine the extent of homelessness among migrants and refugees in Europe; and second, to illuminate the causes and pathways of housing exclusion across different stages in refugees' and migrants' housing trajectories. More specifically, it aimed to bridge existing evidence from statistical data and academic/grey literature with new empirical data collected through primary qualitative research, in order to explore homelessness across three key transition points: arrival, change of status, and family reunification. In doing so, the report adopted the ETHOS Light typology, which advances our understanding and measurement of homelessness from mere rough sleeping to other forms of substandard living conditions. These include institutional accommodation, emergency shelter, non-conventional housing, and hidden homelessness.

The analysis developed in this report demonstrated that homelessness among migrants and refugees in Europe is extensive, yet not fully visible or easy to capture. As discussed in Chapter 2, the statistical data itself has many limitations, given the existence of different definitions in different countries, lack of comparable methodologies, and missing information on migration status, suggesting that the phenomenon is only partially reflected in statistics. However, notwithstanding these limitations, both the quantitative and the qualitative data in this report consistently indicated that refugees and migrants are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in many contexts.

Through casting a sharper light on the nature and scale of homelessness among migrants and refugees, it became evident that the transition points in people's trajectories (arrival, change of status, and family reunification) are particularly important insofar that risks of homelessness emerge or intensify at these junctures. Even if the experiences differ between groups (e.g. refugees, international protection applicants, recipients of temporary protection, beneficiaries of international protection, EU mobile citizens, irregular migrants), there are also many similarities in relation to the root determinants of homelessness across the three transition points.

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At the **transition point upon arrival**, there is a risk of homelessness for many migrant cohorts. Both the literature and the insights from the interviewees pointed to restricted access to welfare and housing for many different refugee and migrant groups, and, in relation to international protection applicants, delays or exclusions from the reception system and inadequate reception conditions when they are provided. Frequently, although technically housed, individuals face deficient living standards that fall within the scope of homelessness as defined by the ETHOS Light framework. Against this backdrop, different migrant groups are affected in different ways at this transition point. Those seeking international protection depend on reception structures that do not operate optimally in many countries, irregular migrants are often excluded altogether or may be reluctant to engage with services as they fear detection, and EU mobile citizens face conditional access which at times creates administrative dead ends and exclusion from support. The empirical evidence also demonstrates that nationality and perceived vulnerability can determine access to accommodation. The data also suggest a worsening situation in many contexts, particularly as regards those seeking international protection, with particular groups excluded outright from reception accommodation in some contexts, and conditions worsening in others. It is noteworthy too that participants expressed concern about 'red lines' being crossed and were of the view that worsening conditions formed part of a policy of deterrence in many contexts.

The **transition point of changed status** - whether that be a change in age (moving from childhood to adulthood) or in migration status - also heightens the risk of housing precarity and homelessness for refugees and migrants. At this pivotal juncture, beneficiaries of international protection need to move from institutional accommodation to independent housing, frequently within tight timescales. They are faced with this task with limited support, in highly pressured housing markets that are often unaffordable to them. Even when people are eligible for standard housing support, numerous impediments, including high rents, lack of affordable housing, bureaucratic procedures, and racism and discrimination, compromise their right to stable living arrangements. The qualitative data confirmed that such impediments are not isolated but inextricably

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intertwined, compounding the risk of homelessness. Those who do not secure international protection or those whose migration status becomes irregular for other reasons, are at even greater risk, given they often lack entitlement to even basic supports and may fear deportation if they do engage with any services that are available to them. This is particularly the case in the context of rising anti-migrant sentiment and the criminalisation of solidarity.

For unaccompanied minors, the age-related transition from childhood to adulthood can pose particular risks. While many may be relatively well protected from homelessness when they arrive as minors, given they become the responsibility of child protection authorities, in many jurisdictions, upon turning eighteen, their support is often abruptly terminated, leading to premature self-reliance and the risk of acute housing insecurity. This trajectory aligns with broader data on care leavers, though it is further compounded by migratory factors. Where unaccompanied minors turn 18 without an outcome to their protection claim, they face the challenge of living in asylum accommodation for adults; where their claim has been successful they face the challenges of trying to secure housing often in the context of limited supply of housing; and where their claim has been refused they face even greater precarity, possibly choosing to move onwards to other countries where they are likely to again experience exclusion from stable accommodation.

The **transition point related to family reunification** appears to illustrate a slightly divergent dynamic, although it is important to note that research in this area is very limited. However, existing evidence suggests there are risks of homelessness at this transition point. Family reunification is often restricted due to income and housing mandates, resulting in it being unattainable for many, despite the evidence of its importance in migrant and refugee wellbeing and integration. However, when it does occur, considerable challenges can emerge. In some circumstances housing has to be arranged by the sponsor in advance of permission to reunite being granted and in those situations homelessness upon arrival may not occur. Nonetheless longer-term housing stability for these families is, of course, not guaranteed. The limited available evidence suggests that when family reunification with refugees occurs, refugee sponsors may struggle to find

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suitable, appropriately sized accommodation, sometimes resulting in families entering homelessness services immediately upon arrival or living in overcrowded conditions. In addition, as evident from the qualitative data, reunified families can face particular challenges in navigating bureaucracy, with systems not designed with their circumstance in mind and with housing professionals sometimes having little knowledge or expertise in relation to their circumstances and legal status. Despite the joy often experienced upon reunification, the re-establishment of relationships after protracted separation periods can be challenging. These challenges must be seen in the context of structural factors that prevent swift reunification from occurring and which fail to provide adequate support when families need them. There is likely to be a risk that relationships experience pressure in these circumstances. In contexts where relationships might actually break down following reunification – an under-researched area - the legal status of the person who joined the sponsor is likely to be very precarious and the risk of homelessness may be significant. This underscores the need for stronger social protection mechanisms that can safeguard individuals beyond their dependency on family members. It is important to note too that, as evidenced by the qualitative interviews, countries are adopting increasingly restrictive family reunification policies, again suggesting a deterrence approach. In the years to come, if homelessness among reunified family members decreases it is likely that it reflects this policy context, which will leave many families separated from one another for longer or even permanent periods of time.

EU mobile citizens are also vulnerable at transition points, although the right to free movement means that these points are less visible than for third country nationals. Transitions between employment, unemployment and job-seeking are particularly important for this group and member states give access to different levels of support for these categories under EU law.

Across all transition points, a consistent and pervasive finding is the central role of structural exclusion driven by several overlapping factors, such as restrictive access to welfare and housing, problems in reception systems, complex bureaucracy, racism and discrimination, and limited support structures. The existing literature and the new qualitative data presented here strongly confirm

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that, for many refugees and migrants, these structural factors interact to create cumulative obstacles to securing permanent and adequate accommodation.

Both existing literature and our new data suggest that racism and discrimination are particularly prevalent across transition points. They affect both how systems function and how people are treated in day-to-day contexts, particularly when navigating both state institutions and the private rental market. Evidence highlighted that systemic and personal bias creates significant barriers for migrants and refugees, making it more difficult to navigate systems and extremely challenging to secure a place to live. The qualitative evidence suggested that housing discrimination is likely to intensify in the context of rising anti-migrant sentiment and divisive political rhetoric, with intersectional factors like gender and ethnicity leading to highly unequal impacts. The evidence also points to the fact that it is tricky to pin racism down, with seasoned professionals knowing that those with whom they are working are experiencing racism but finding it very difficult to prove it or take action to prevent it.

Simultaneously, broader migration policies play a critical role, whereby restrictive measures and deterrence-oriented approaches can increase the risk of homelessness or push it into less visible forms. Findings indicate that deterrence-focused immigration strategies (e.g. border pushbacks, exclusion from reception infrastructure and restricted access to welfare) appear to be resulting in increased migrant homelessness, with some professionals expressing the view that this is the intention: create more homelessness so that people are deterred from arriving in a given country. Often these measures further displace people, pushing them towards onward migration and increasing hidden housing precariousness. This trend seems likely to continue, at least in the short to medium term.

While the overarching landscape remains notably precarious, the report also unearthed some good practices that can make a positive difference for the housing and integration of migrants and refugees. Especially at the point of changed status, measures like longer move-on periods, transitional housing, counselling and financial support can help people manage this transition more successfully. The example from Italy where former unaccompanied minors continued to receive support and accommodation after turning eighteen, revealed

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that continuity in structured support systems is an essential factor in preventing homelessness. Where state provisions are inadequate, NGOs appear as trusted organizations providing accommodation, as well as practical help, information and guidance.

This research was necessarily exploratory, given the broad scope. There is a need for more research on specific migrant groups, given the very diverse circumstances of different groups and given the contrasting legal and policy instruments in place in relation to them. For example, housing in the context of free movement migration has received little attention in the literature. There is a need to conduct research in this area as the relationship between homelessness and free movement is very specific. Research at the different transition points is also needed, with a particular need for research on family reunification and research that captures the implications of the Pact. In addition, here is a need for both more robust cross-national quantitative data as well as additional longitudinal qualitative studies that follow the housing trajectories of refugees and migrants over time.

For the next phase of our Work Package, we will focus on effective interventions, building on the findings from this phase. We will explore in detail the kinds of responses that can reduce or prevent migrant homelessness. More specifically, the aim will be to examine good practices implemented by governments, NGOs, and migrants themselves to prevent homelessness across three critical transition points in Europe. By analysing successful strategies, the next deliverable will intend to identify practical and policy pathways to mitigate housing exclusion among refugees and migrants.

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List of Legislation

Legislation	Weblink
Article 21 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A12008E021
Article 45 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008E045
Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR) (Regulation (EU) 2024/1351)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1351/oj/eng
Common European Asylum System (CEAS)	https://shorturl.at/drwCj
1951 United Nations (UN) Convention	https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention

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1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugee	https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-relating-status-refugees
Article 153(1)(j) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008E153
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT
Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on Fighting Housing Exclusion	https://shorturl.at/H51yK
Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:158:0077:0123:en:PDF
Dublin Regulation	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/604/oj/eng
European Commission Affordable Housing Plan	https://housing.ec.europa.eu/european-affordable-housing-plan_en
European Commission Anti Poverty Strategy	https://shorturl.at/Cknc1
European Social Fund Plus	https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en

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EU Pact on Migration and Asylum ('the Pact')	https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en
European Platform on Combating Homelessness	https://shorturl.at/jstyn
European Regional Development Fund	https://www.eufunds.ie/european-regional-development-fund/
EU's Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/86/oj/eng
EU Directive 2014/36/EU Seasonal Workers Directive	https://tinyurl.com/5afyjzab
EU free movement legislation for European citizens	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2004/38/oj/eng
EU Single Permit Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1233)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1233/oj/eng
Facilitation Directive (2002/90/EC)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2002/90/oj/eng
Free Movement Directive	https://tinyurl.com/4a94749v
Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on housing and assistance for the homeless	https://tinyurl.com/hw2buh9b
Qualification Regulation (EU) 2024/1347) Reception Conditions Directive	https://tinyurl.com/2kxeds32
Reception Conditions Directive (EU) 2024/1346)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1346/oj/eng
recast *Reception Conditions Directive* (2024)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1346/oj/eng
Recast of Directive 2003/109/EC	https://tinyurl.com/2twmh4k6

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Returns Regulation	https://tinyurl.com/2c6favz9
revised European Social Charter	https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=163
Temporary Protection Council Directive 2001/55/EC	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32001L0055
Treaty on European Union/ Maastricht Treaty 1992	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:11992M/TXT

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