HOMELESSNESS IN EUROPE
THE STATE OF PLAY

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1.

AN ISSUE HIGH ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

《 **Homelessness remains an issue in many Member States, along with challenges related to housing affordability and accessibility, particularly in urban areas, to energy poverty and to the high cost of living impacting a broad range of people, but mostly those on low incomes, calling for integrated strategies and follow-up. Taking into account national competences, continued action is warranted on accessible, efficient, green and affordable social housing to meet the housing needs of all, to eradicate homelessness and to promote a housing first approach.** 》[1]

La Hulpe Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights,
16 April 2024

Since the Lisbon Declaration and the launch of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness (EPOCH) in March 2021[2], the issue of homelessness at EU level seems to be gradually gaining political legitimacy. The La Hulpe Declaration – ratified on 16 April 2024 by the Parliament, the Commission, the majority of Member States, the main trade unions and several civil society representatives – is one of the latest indicators of this breakthrough. The declaration underscores the importance of maintaining the issue as a top political priority and supporting national programmes that tackle it directly. It also acknowledges the Platform's central role by advocating for an increase in its resources. As is the case for the European Union insofar as the social sphere is concerned, the Platform lacks legally binding tools, but its robust political mandate gives reason to hope that it will be able to encourage other stakeholders to invest more, by highlighting the effective measures being implemented at local level. It is to be hoped that these geographically dispersed measures will spread, gradually bringing about real change.

2. STATISTICS ON HOMELESSNESS

Towards a more systematic approach

There has been much laudable progress regarding the quantitative evaluation of homelessness in Europe. Firstly, some national and regional surveys were systematised and refined in 2023 and 2024. For the second year running, the Federal Statistics Office in **Germany** has carried out a particularly in-depth survey on people staying in accommodation centres[3]. Building on a study aimed at improving the data collection system in **Austria**[4], administrative data for measuring homelessness has been revised and expanded. Supported by the Flemish and Wallonian authorities, the King Baudouin Foundation presented two regional estimates[5], based on the results of counts carried out in **Belgium**. Lastly, alongside the national statistics, two local surveys conducted in the **Netherlands** – using a proven methodology[6] – furthered understanding of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness. Overall, these improvements are evidence not only of a growing desire to understand the problem more comprehensively, but also of the methodological harmonisation that is ongoing at EU level; all these studies explicitly refer to the categories from FEANTSA's ETHOS light typology[7].

Alongside the numerous advances in the field, the many initiatives being used to measure the problem at city-level deserve a mention. The pilot study by **Spain's** General Directorate of Family Diversity and Social Services and implemented by the SIIS (Information and Social Research Service) in 27 cities is a good example of this[8]. For this large-scale project, the size and composition of the homeless population was evaluated over one night in communes of varying size and type, taking into account both people rough sleeping and those residing in accommodation centres[9]. During the night counts that involved no fewer than 2,251 volunteers, two out of five people were surveyed on their profile and their background. What largely emerged from these questionnaires was that the main cause of homelessness for the people surveyed was structural, i.e. their administrative status (38%) and their lack of financial resources (30%). Analysis of the data also shows that a significant proportion of those surveyed had been homeless for over two years (45%).

The idea that statistical measurement of homelessness contributes to guiding policy interventions seems to be gaining ground, including in the EU institutions. By funding the *European Homelessness Counts project*, the Commission is following the lead of researchers who have long been calling for an EU-wide evaluation of the issue. It is a tall order as the goal is to coordinate a series of counts in several European cities using the ETHOS light categories as a common basis. As part of the goal to systematise approaches that attempt to define the number and profiles of homeless people, the project aims to both establish a common framework for defining housing exclusion and to encourage the standardisation of data collection techniques. This methodological standardisation will, in particular, enable meaningful comparison. The *European Homelessness Counts project* will see 15 cities participating in the first year[10]. In the roll-out of this initial phase and according to

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the interest shown, the counts may be repeated the following year: the 15 cities from Phase 1 will repeat the count, along with potentially 20 new cities.

The following two data sources may facilitate a more detailed overview. On the one hand, the *ad hoc* module on working and housing conditions in the EU-SILC (*European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions*)[11] carried out by Eurostat in 2023 will provide data on the prevalence of homelessness among the European population: The statistical data made available in 2024 will, in particular, integrate a variable to estimate the proportion of people homeless during the previous year. On the other hand, the full results of the 2021 population census (including the housing stock) carried out in each Member State[12], provides valuable information on the number, geographical distribution, and profile of those identified as homeless or living in non-conventional dwellings. In addition to putting the different national and regional realities into perspective, these results should *a priori* give some indications as to the socio-demographic features of those experiencing housing exclusion. While the figures taken from these two large-scale surveys may prove difficult to cross-reference with existing data, they will unquestionably provide new angles with which to approach and study the issue.

Inventory of the data available

For now, the national statistics remain inadequate for objectively gauging the homeless population across Europe as a whole. Furthermore, despite significant progress in this regard, the lack of homogeneity in the methods and processes used to count homeless people at local level continues to be a major barrier to aggregating and comparing at EU level.

Nonetheless, efforts to gather and compile the latest available data in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation is ongoing, as shown by the results of a study recently published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[13] as part of the EPOCH work programme. Based on the responses to the questionnaire (QuASH – *Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing*) given to member countries[14], the OECD compiled data on the statistics approved by the public authorities, how they are produced and the realities that they cover. In total, 40 governments (26 of which are in the EU) participated in drawing up a very comprehensive catalogue that enabled homelessness to be estimated per country in a fairly precise way. For each figure provided, the date of the survey, the definition of homelessness used, the data collection method, and the ETHOS light categories covered[15] were stated; any inclusion of minors, asylum seekers, refugees, and/or domestic abuse victims was also noted.

The following table provides an inventory that differs in part from the OECD's[16]. It also distinguishes between two types of methodology: point-in-time counts, which provide a snapshot of housing exclusion at a specific moment (*green*); and flow data recording, which is carried out over a long period and provides the averages or prevalence data (*green*). Results from surveys considered too old or not sufficiently robust (*red*) were not included – which explains the absence of data from Bulgaria, **Cyprus**, **Greece**, **Malta**, and **Slovakia**. For all countries listed, the source, method, date, duration, and results of the survey are given[17]. Where possible, data specific to each housing exclusion situation covered have been reorganised to align with the ETHOS light cate-

gories. In cases where people found themselves in situations that defy clear categorisation, the figures were considered relevant to several cate-gories. Data pertaining to living situations that are not described by ETHOS light typology were categorised as "Other".

ETHOS LIGHT
EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION

1	People living rough
2	People in emergency accommodation
3	People in accommodation for the homeless
4	People living in institutions
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends

COUNT TYPES
CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE METHOD USED AND QUALITY OF DATA COLLECTED
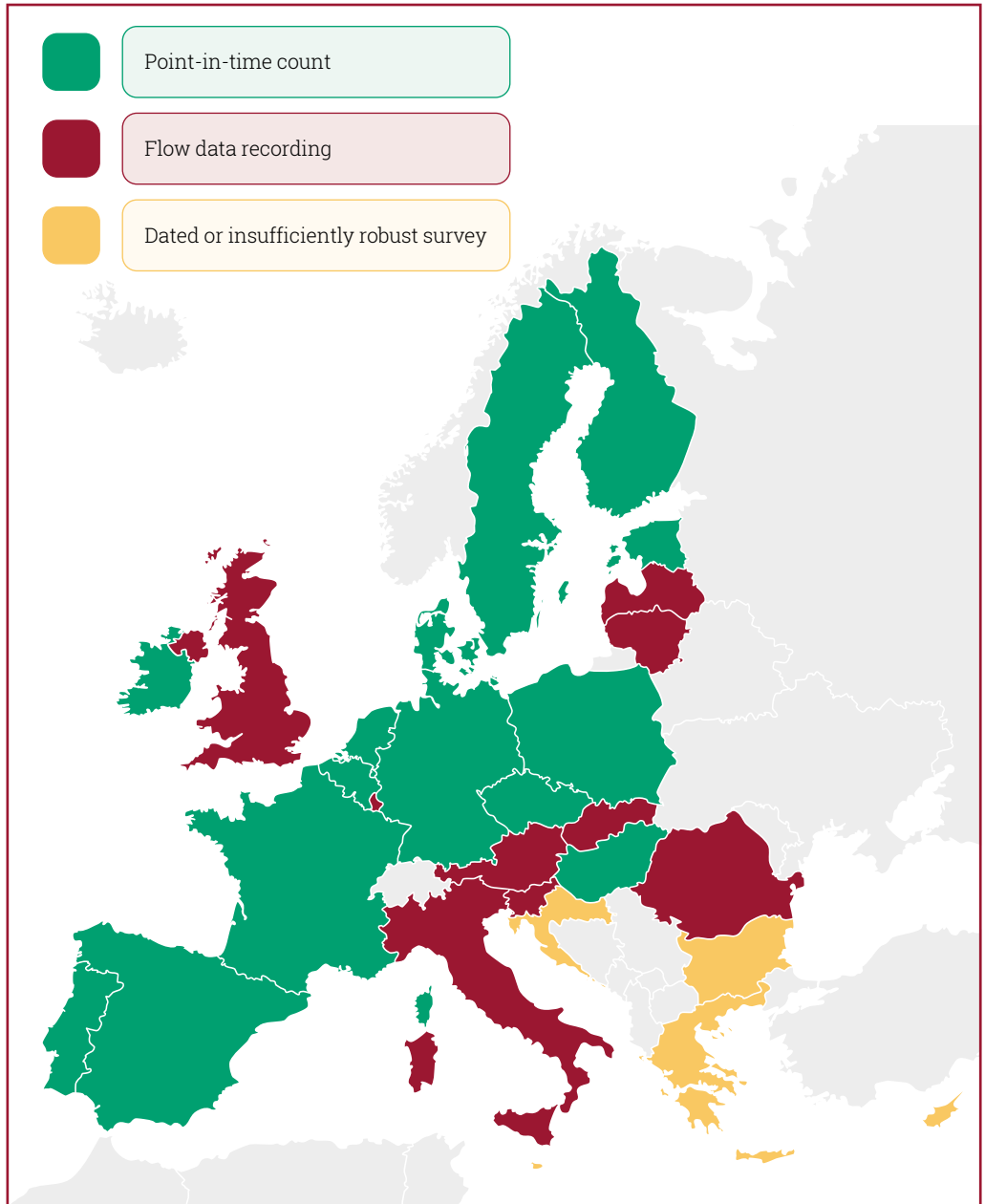
Point-in-time count

Flow data recording

Dated or insufficiently robust survey

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Photo : @juliedebellaing/DoucheFLUX

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DATA ON HOUSING EXCLUSION
STATISTICS FROM RECENT SURVEYS, COUNT TYPES, AND DETAILS BY ETHOS LIGHT CATEGORY

Country	Source	Method
Austria	Statistik Austria	Recording
Belgium	Bruss'help / FRB & Administrations régionales	Count / Extrapolation
Czechia	SocioFactor	Count / Extrapolation
Denmark	VIVE	Count
Estonia	Eesti Statistika	Count
Finland	Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus	Count
France	Fondation Abbé Pierre	Count
Germany	Destatis / GISS & Kantar Public	Count / Survey
Hungary	Menhely Alapítvány	Count
Ireland	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Count
Italy	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica	Recording
Latvia	Labklājības ministrija	Recording
Lithuania	Statistics Lithuania	Recording
Luxembourg	Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région	Recording
Netherlands	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek	Count / Extrapolation
Poland	Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej	Count
Portugal	ENIPSSA	Count
Romania	Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale	Recording
Slovakia	Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny	Recording
Slovenia	Inštitut Republike Slovenije za Socialno varstvo	Recording
Spain	Instituto Nacional de Estadística	Count / Extrapolation
Sweden	Socialstyrelsen	Count
UK	Crisis	Recording / Extrapolation

Date	Period	ETHOS 1	ETHOS 2	ETHOS 3	ETHOS 4	ETHOS 5	ETHOS 6	Other	Total
2022	1 year								19,667
2022 - 2023	1 night	2,328	2,484	12,566	3,588	7,827	13,475	3,592	45,860
2022	4 months	12,000		18,426		16,058	54,244		100,728
2022	1 week	535	248	2,955	195		1,152	704	5,789
2021	1 night								1,068
2022	1 night	464		414	412		2,139		3,429
2021	1 night		166,331	42,743					209,074
2022 - 2023	1 night / 1 week	32,467	8,280	363,780			52,033		456,560
2023	1 night	1,530	5,738						7,268
2023	1 week		13,318						13,318
2021	1 year								96,197
2022	1 year		5,997						5,997
2022	1 year		4,317						4,317
2022	1 year		445	251					696
2023	1 night								30,600
2019	1 night	2,551	4,299	16,962	3,062	3,456			30,330
2022	1 night	5,975		4,798					10,773
2022	1 year		1,053	840					1,893
2020	1 year		7,609	3,052					10,661
2021	1 year			1,239					1,239
2022	6 weeks	4,508	11,498			5,478		7,068	28,552
2023	1 week								27,383
2019	1 year	17,042	46,875	22,371		18,556	137,588		242,432

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New European estimate

These statistics enable to propose a new approximation of the European homeless population. The estimate is based on a compilation of data from point-in-time counts *(green)* covering people in situations of housing exclusion described by ETHOS Light categories 1, 2 and 3: a total of 737,198 people counted in 11 countries. This total is then compared with the sum of the population of these 11 countries (295,153,618 people according to Eurostat) to obtain an average rate (0.250%). The percentage is finally applied to the European population (515,155,514 including the UK) to determine the result. Overall, Europe could count 1,286,691 rough sleepers, people in night shelters and people in temporary accommodation for the homeless. It should be noted that this figure partly testifies to an objective trend in homelessness in certain countries, but it also largely reflects improvements in the accuracy and coverage of counts.

1 287 000

**ESTIMATE OF
THE NUMBER OF ROUGH
SLEEPERS, PEOPLE STAYING
IN NIGHT SHELTERS AND IN
TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

Data should be interpreted with caution

Quantitative measures are essential to fully assess homelessness. Nonetheless, the survey data cannot be completely disconnected from the contexts in which they were produced, at the risk of distorting the data. In fact, high levels are due largely to the countries' means of effectively counting the homeless population: the political attention the problem receives, a wide definition of homelessness, the social services that contribute to raising awareness around the problem and the techniques for data capture on a large scale. Conversely, in some countries that report a low number of homeless people, the issue is possibly not given adequate importance and is thus largely underestimated. While diagnostic statistics can serve to force public authorities to face their responsibilities, the raw figures alone only rarely show the gravity of the situation.

3. SOME RECENT NATIONAL DATA

GERMANY

On 31 January 2023, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany collected, for the second year running, a set of data on homelessness in Germany[18]. These data relate exclusively to people in accommodation centres managed by local authorities and independent homeless organisations – with complementary surveys counting rough sleepers and people temporarily living with family and friends to be repeated in 2024. In total, 372,060 people were counted at the beginning of 2023, which is a significant increase on the previous year mainly due to better communication of the data by the organisations involved. Also of note is that more than one-third of people counted (35%) were Ukrainian refugees (130,000 in 2023, compared to 305 in 2022).

When these new groups who sought refuge in the country are included, the proportion of foreign nationals counted reaches 84% (*figure 1*). This group includes a particularly high number of adults and children living in families (67%), i.e. couples with children represent 35% of foreign nationals. This reality is in clear contrast with the family composition of homeless people with German nationality. For this group, the proportion of singles was 71%. The figures recorded in 2023 further reveal a slight change in the gender mix. While most homeless people are men, there are proportionally fewer than was observed in 2022 (54% compared to 63% of people whose gender was stated). The average age of those counted has not changed significantly (31 years in 2023, compared to 32 years in 2022) although the number of people under 18 has proportionally increased somewhat (31% compared to 27%).

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FIGURE 1 · GERMANY
DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONALITY OF PEOPLE COUNTED ACCORDING TO FAMILY COMPOSITION
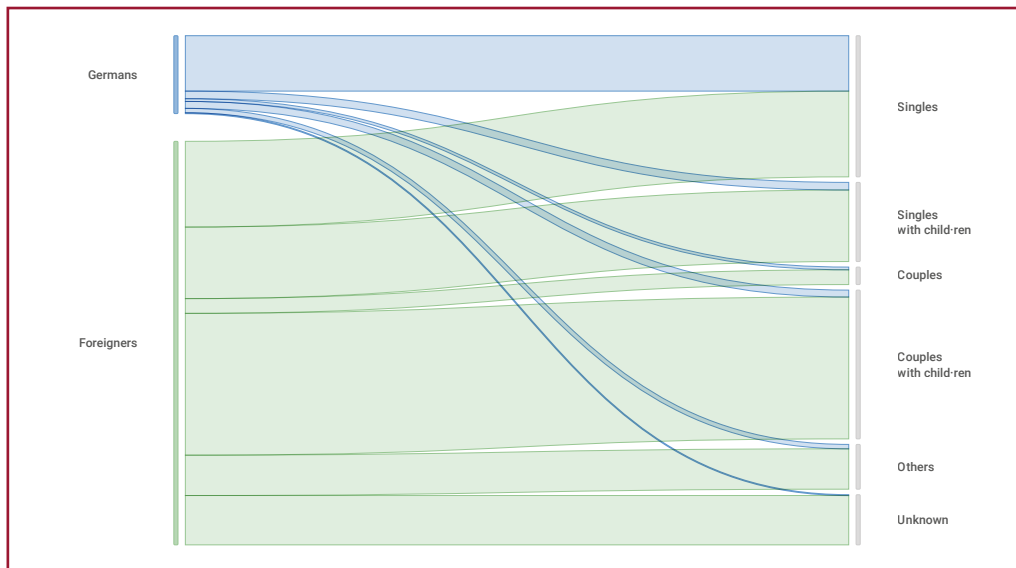

Destatis 2023

BELGIUM

For several years, an increasing number of counts have been carried out in Belgium's cities and provinces. The results of these surveys, based on a common methodology and carried out with the same protocols, can now provide an overview of homelessness country-wide. Supported by the King Baudouin Foundation, the Flanders region and the OWSA (Wallonian observatory on homelessness), researchers involved in the local counts presented two regional estimates in March 2024, based on the data collected across the country[19]. When collated with the figures from the last count conducted in the Brussels-Capital Region in 2022[20], the results of these estimates in Flanders and Wallonia offer an unprecedented overview.

Estimates suggest that there are approximately 19,479 homeless individuals in Flanders and 19,247 in Wallonia. When the 7,134 people in the Brussels-Capital Region are included, there were at least 45,860 homeless people in Belgium. The detail in the estimates along with the particularly robust methodology used in the local counts enables the data to be analysed per ETHOS light category and per city size *(figure 2)*. While it is not surprising that the number of rough sleepers, people in emergency accommodation or in non-conventional dwellings (squats, etc.) is proportionally much higher in large cities (42% of people counted in cities of over 120,000 inhabitants), it seems that the number of people staying in homeless accommodation or temporarily housed with family/friends is significant across all communes (6,993 and 7,407 people respectively for cities of less than 50,000 inhabitants compared to 5,573 and 6,068 for cities of more than 50,000).

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FIGURE 2 · BELGIUM
**BY ETHOS LIGHT CATEGORY AND BY CITY SIZE**
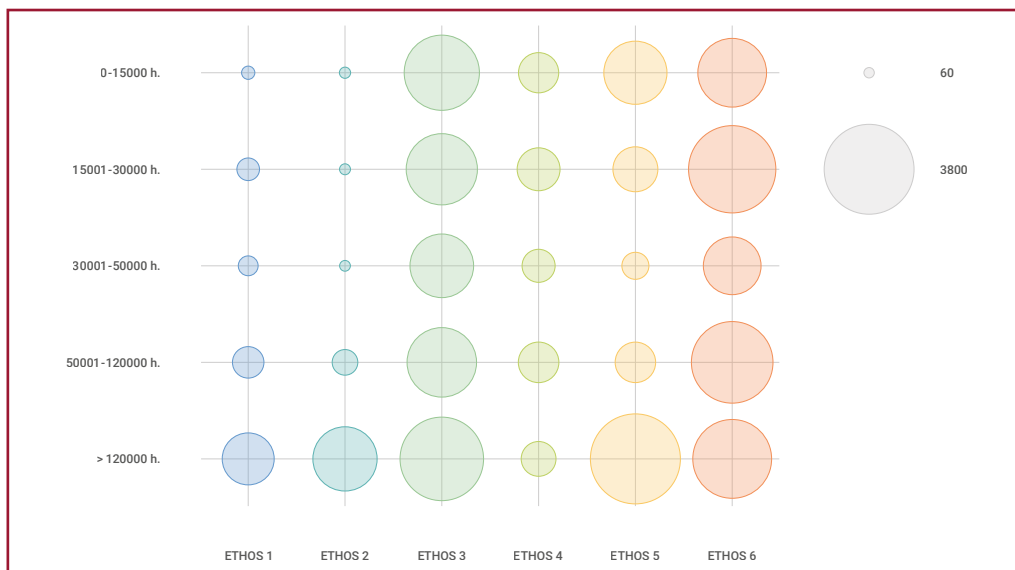
Bruss'help/KBF & Regional Administrations · 2022-2023

FINLAND

Since the end of the 1980s, the ARA (Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland) has carried out an annual survey on homelessness in **Finland**[21]. Each year, the country's municipalities are asked to provide a data set based on the social services registers, housing applicant registers of municipal rental housing companies, and service providers' customer registers. Despite the apparent accuracy of this method, the data collected are for information purposes only, mainly because the data collection methods and the evaluation criteria can differ from municipality to municipality. The quality of data further depends on the level of participation, which has fluctuated slightly over the years. In 2023, 72% of Finnish municipalities (i.e. 210 of the country's 293) responded to the survey. Of these, only 83 noted the presence of homeless people in their district.

On 15 November 2023, 3,429 homeless people were identified. Of these, 14% were rough sleeping or in emergency accommodation, 12% were in homeless shelters, 12% were living in an institution due to lack of housing and 32% were staying temporarily with friends or family. Between 2022 and 2023, the total number of homeless individuals decreased by 7%. Notably, the number of women and individuals under 25 experienced particularly significant reductions, with decreases of 17% and 35%, respectively. A large majority of the people counted were in metropolitan areas. While the figures in Helsinki have seen a clear drop (-18%), the capital is still where 22% of the country's homeless population is living. Long-term data collected in Finland shows the effectiveness of its national strategy implemented to combat housing exclusion (figure 3). Between 1987 and 2023, the number of people who were homeless or experiencing housing exclusion fell by 80%.

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FIGURE 3 · FINLAND
CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE COUNTED PER ETHOS LIGHT CATEGORY
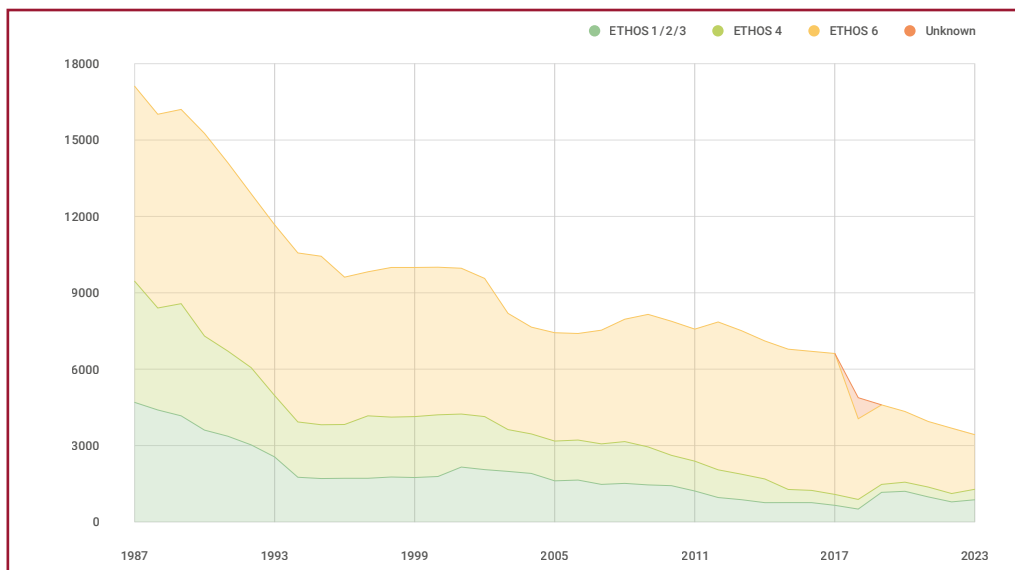

ARA · 1987-2023

PORTUGAL

Since 2018, data has been collected at national level in **Portugal** by a group of organisations charged with implementing and following up on the national strategy for integrating homeless people (ENIPSSA – Estratégia Nacional para a Integração das Pessoas em Situação de Sem-Abrigo). Each year, a questionnaire to gather information on the size and composition of the homeless population is sent out to the mainland's 278 municipalities via various institutions working at local level. Two broad categories of circumstance are identified in accordance with the Council of Ministers' resolution that ratified the national strategy for the period 2017-2023: rough sleepers, people in emergency accommodation or makeshift shelters (*sem teto*) and people staying in homeless shelters (*sem casa*).

According to the results of the most recent survey, carried out on 31 December 2022, there were 10,773 homeless people in **Portugal**[22] – 55% of them were sleeping in public spaces, in unconventional dwellings or in emergency accommodation (5,975 people) and 45% were staying in homeless accommodation and supported accommodation (4,798). The highest proportions of homelessness were found in the country's three southern regions (0.213% in Alentejo, 0.160% in the Lisbon metropolitan area and 0.151% in the Algarve). The data collected through questionnaires also provides several socio-demographic indicators: 72% of those identified were men; 38% were aged between 45 and 64; and 79% were Portuguese nationals. With regard to changes in numbers of homeless people, data recorded since 2018 indicates a significant increase (+78%). However, this can partly be explained by improvements in data collection by the municipalities.

FIGURE 4 · PORTUGAL
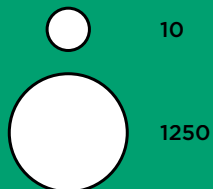**CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE COUNTED PER ETHOS LIGHT CATEGORY**
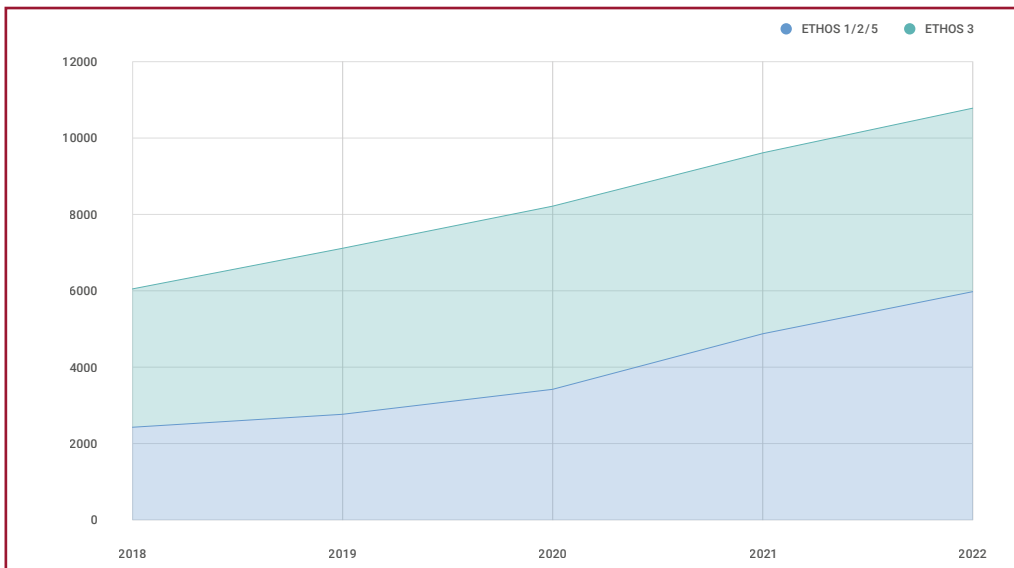
ENIPSSA · 2018-2022

Photo : @juliedebellaing/DoucheFLUX
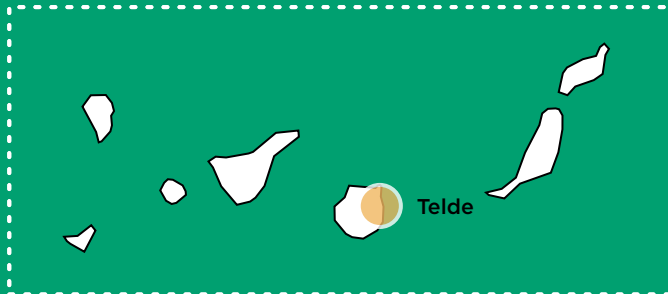
23

COUNT RESULT

IN 27 SPANISH C

46.3 %

people in public spaces and non conventional structures

53.7 %

people in accomodation centres and Housing First units

PEOPLE COUNTED BY CITY

○ 10

○ 1250

PERCENTAGE AMONG THE POPULATION

■ 0.005 - 0.030
■ 0.030 - 0.055
■ 0.055 - 0.079
■ 0.079 - 0.104
■ 0.104 - 0.128
■ 0.128 - 0.153
■ 0.153 - 0.178
■ 0.178 - 0.202
■ 0.202 - 0.227
■ 0.227 - 0.252

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE

6144

SIIS Centro de Documentación y Estudios (2024)
Proyecto piloto de recuentos nocturnos de personas sin hogar en España 2023 : Principales resultados y aprendizajes de los recuentos nocturnos llevados cabo en 27 ciudades
San Sebastián : Ministerio de Derechos Sociales

Telde

Gijón

Avilés

Oviedo

Pamplona/Iruña

Logroño

Burgos

Palencia

Tudela

Valladolid

Zaragoza

Zamora

Parla

Castelló de la Plana

València

Palma

Torrent

Ciudad Real

Albacete

Gandia

Elche/Elx

Alicante/Alacant

Córdoba

Carthagena

Almeria

Càdiz

Algeciras

4. CONSIDERING EACH UNIQUE CONTEXT

Homelessness is a reality across all of Europe, but the form it takes and its causes can vary significantly from one country to another. In essence, the socio-economic and political contexts unique to each Member State – along with legal and administrative specificities – shape both the analysis of the problem and the strategies for addressing it. The elements detailed in this section aim to give a brief overview of these specificities within some EU Member States. The information was collected through questionnaires issued to FEANTSA members.

According to the figures published by **Austria**'s Federal Statistical Office, there has been an overall drop in the number of people identified as homeless by the municipalities. This downward trend has, however, long been queried by homeless associations, which point to shortcomings in the data collection system. The figures are in part provided by accommodation centres and platforms where homeless people can register and receive their post; however the list of these structures is not regularly updated and thus does not account for changes occurring over time. For this reason, the ministry of social affairs recently authorised Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Austrian Academy of Sciences) to carry out a feasibility study with the aim of improving national data collection. The results of this study highlight, in particular, the need to broaden and to combine data sources in each *Land* in order to cover a wider range of of homelessness situations[23]. Redesigning the measurement system will also provide a clearer understanding of the extent of homelessness and its changes over time. Over the last two years, inflation in Austria has been higher than the euro area average (10.5% compared to 9.2%

in December 2022 and 5.7% compared to 2.9% in December 2023)[24]. This level of inflation has had a strong impact on house prices. Average rents inclusive of charges increased by 8.0% between Q3 2022 and Q3 2023 (reaching EUR 9.5 per m^2)[25], a trend that risks leading to a hike in evictions and consequently an increase in the number of people left without a housing solution.

Homeless numbers are falling in **Denmark** according to figures from the latest surveys carried out in 2019 and 2022. This significant drop in the number of people counted by VIVE (the Danish Center for Social Science Research) is in contrast with the upward trend recorded between 2009 and 2017. A number of factors account for this change. The provisions and measures taken during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 to protect vulnerable groups and to help people to get off the streets are undoubtedly a determining factor. The noteworthy decrease in the number of people forced to spend the night in public spaces is very likely linked to the extended capacity in accommodation centres – between 2021 and 2022, the number of beneficiaries of refuges and homeless shelters increased by 5%[26]. At the same time, national data shows a significant decrease in the number of homeless individuals aged 18-24, which several observers attribute to greater political action on the problem of youth homelessness. In recent years, several cities have deployed support and integration measures specifically targeting homeless young people. It is worth noting that in some areas these measures are financed by public-private partnerships. For example, social investment funds and Bikubenfonden have enabled Aarhus commune and Roskilde municipality to convert accommodation centres into temporary housing,

to offer intensive support to young people with addiction problems, to develop employment programmes and to increase the resources allocated to Housing First solutions[27].

Ireland has experienced a drastic increase in the number of people in emergency accommodation over the last 10 years. The situation is the result of a confluence of factors: a severe shortage of social and affordable housing exacerbated by austerity measures taken to address the 2008 financial crisis[28] along with soaring rents in the private rental sector and heightened vulnerability of the poorest households. The increased number of families in homelessness rose sharply at the beginning of 2014, which was when excessive dependence on the private housing market entered a new phase. To mitigate the lack of social housing, the Irish government and local authorities chose to rely on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), a support measure that aims to enable access to the private rental market for households eligible for social housing[29]. However, by subsidising excessive rents in an unregulated market with rampant speculation, this measure contributed to rising housing costs, and as a consequence, to increased evictions in the years since. And yet, until recently, the HAP was the only measure enabling homeless people in emergency accommodation to be rehoused. However, following a winter moratorium on evictions and the establishment of tighter regulations on rents in 2022, many landlords sold their properties or withdrew from the market, thus causing a drop in the number of homes available for rent. As both a cause of the housing crisis and an obstacle to resolving it, this vicious circle has resulted in an ever-increasing number of people in emergency accommodation for extended periods.

The homelessness situation in **Czechia** remains uncertain due to a lack of surveys conducted at regular intervals using a consistent methodology. Nonetheless, studies conducted in 2019 and 2022 give an indication as to the extent of housing exclusion at national level: a large proportion of people are living in homeless accommodation or are staying temporarily with friends/family through lack of any alternative. In 2023, the country had 212 long-term accommodation centres with a total capacity of 7,182 places. At the same time, organisations working on the ground have noticed an increase in the number of people accessing low-threshold services (such as food banks) and seeking basic necessities from day centres. Increasing poverty among a section of the population is likely connected to the effects of the economic recession and the significant increase in the cost of living, particularly housing. **Czechia** is one of the European Union countries that has seen the highest rate of inflation over the last two years. Figures from Q1 2023 published by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce[30] are particularly telling: the average rent increased by 6.4% year-on-year and housing-related products and services rose by 17.8%. According to the same statistical data, between 2022 and 2023, price hikes in electricity, natural gas, and heating amounted to 32.6%, 73.2%, and 45.0% respectively – a worrying trend given that in spring 2021, at least 910,000 people were already experiencing energy poverty[31].

# 5. MEASURES CURRENTLY IN PLACE TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

In recent years, many Member States have established, updated or strengthened national strategies to structure and coordinate the various homelessness prevention and management measures. The objectives and timelines announced as part of these roadmaps are often detailed and generally ambitious. This is evidenced by research published in April 2024 by the OECD[32], which offers an overview of these policy programmes along with a statistical review of data recognised by governments. On the basis of responses to the questionnaires on affordable and social housing (QuASH) in 2019, 2021 and 2023, this study shows that 16 Member States claim to have an active strategy in place to combat homelessness at national level. Two countries – **Austria** and **Estonia** – have coordinated policies at regional level due to how competencies are decentralised across their jurisdictions. In the **United Kingdom**, each nation has its own strategy on housing exclusion: in **England**, resources are mainly directed towards prevention so that nobody ends up sleeping rough; in **Northern Ireland**, the approach entails a joint intervention by different bodies to support households at risk of housing exclusion; in **Wales**, the reorganisation of services aims to guarantee rapid and sustainable rehousing of people; and in **Scotland**, cross-sectoral collaboration aims at prevention centred around the individual and their needs[33].

The following table shows the 16 national strategies identified by the OECD and presents the important principles and measures that emerge from each official document. It is important to note that the table is based solely on the content of publications approved by governments or relevant authorities. It does not evaluate the relevance or feasibility of the programmes, nor does it take into account the political and socio-economic contexts in which the projections were made. The characteristic elements of the strategies are organised into five themes (coordination, prevention, law, support and housing). For the purposes of readability and balance, a maximum of three elements were selected per country and per theme. These elements may relate to a guiding principle or a specific measure; therefore their number does not necessarily reflect the importance of each theme within the documents. The table simply aims to give an overview enabling immediate identification of the subjects that are recurring, absent from the agenda, or currently being tackled.

STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS
INFORMATION COMPILED BY THE OECD (QUESTIONNAIRE ON AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING · 2024)

National strategy

Regional or local strategy

No strategy

29
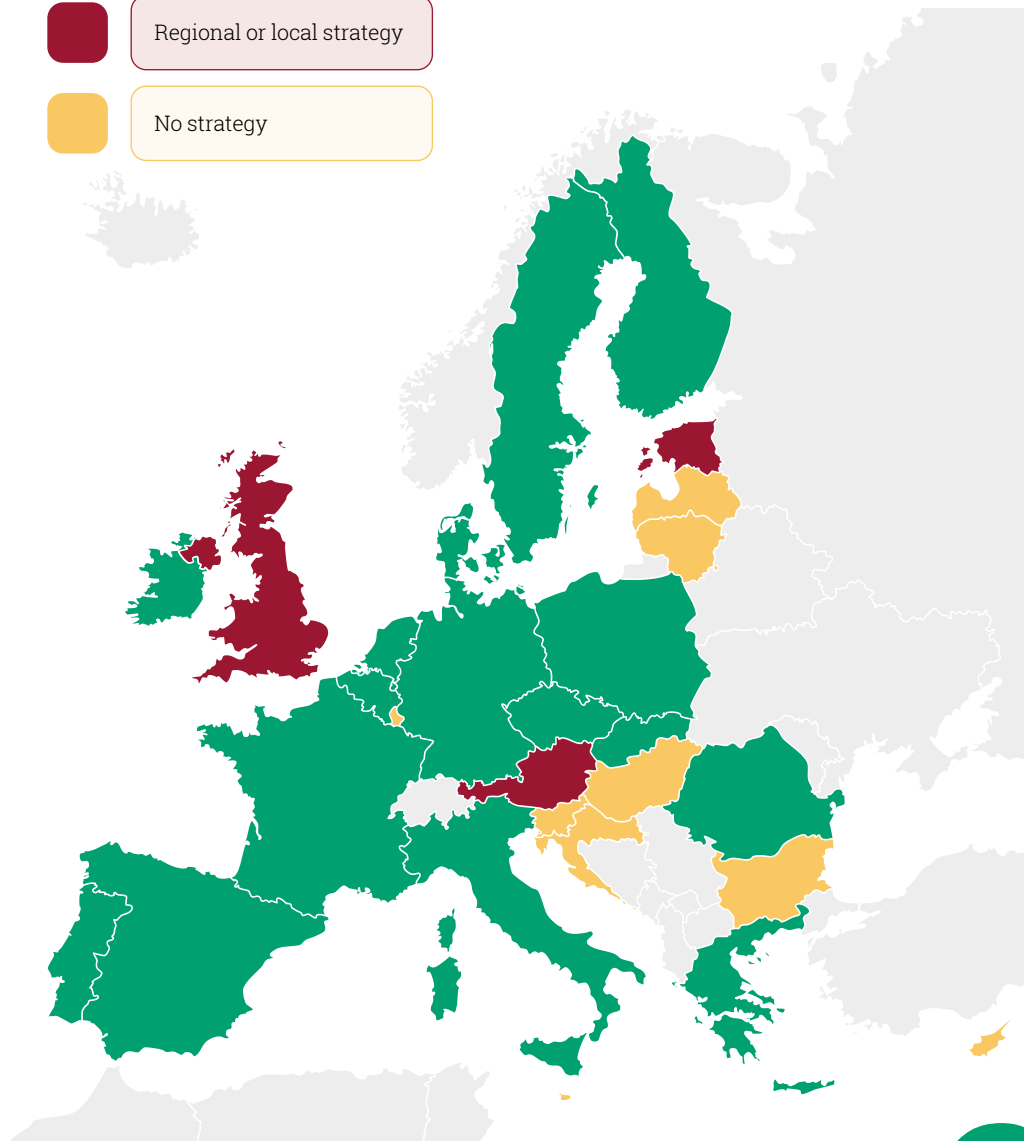
COUNTRIES WITH NATIONAL STRATEGY
PRINCIPLES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE STRATEGIES REVIEWED BY THE OECD (2024)

	Strategy	Period	Coordination
Belgium	Accord de coopération concernant le sans-abrisme et l'absence de chez-soi	2023 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Harmonisation of support services Data collection
Czech Republic	Strategie sociálního začleňování	2021 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Needs assessment
Denmark	Fonden for blandede byer - flere billige boliger og en vej ud af hjemløshed	2021 - 2035	Coordination and monitoring
Finland	Ohjelma pitkäaikaisasunnottomuuden poistamiseksi vuoteen 2027 mennessä	2024 - 2026	Coordination and monitoring Limiting temporary solutions
France	Plan quinquennal pour le logement d'abord et la lutte contre le sans-abrisme	2023 - 2027	Coordination and monitoring Needs assessment Data collection
Germany	Gemeinsam für ein Zuhause. Nationaler Aktionsplan gegen Wohnungslosigkeit	2024 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Needs assessment Data collection
Greece	Εθνικό Σχέδιο Δράσης για τη στήριξη των αστέγων	2023 - 2027	Coordination and monitoring Needs assessment Data collection
Ireland	Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland	2021 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Reducing vacancy rates
Italy	Piano nazionale degli interventi e dei servizi sociali	2021 - 2023	Coordination and monitoring Harmonisation of support services
Netherlands	Nationaal Actieplan Dakloosheid Eerst een Thuis	2023 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Data collection
Poland	Strategia rozwoju usług społecznych	2022 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Deinstitutionalisation
Portugal	Nacional para a Integração das Pessoas em Situação de Sem-Abrigo	2025 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Deinstitutionalisation Data collection
Romania	Strategia națională privind incluziunea socială a persoanelor fără adăpost	2022 - 2027	Coordination and monitoring Data collection
Slovakia	Národná koncepcia prevencie a ukončovania bezdomovstva	2022 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Needs assessment Data collection
Spain	Estrategia Nacional para la lucha contra el sinhogarismo en España	2023 - 2030	Coordination and monitoring Deinstitutionalisation Data collection
Sweden	Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet	2022 - 2026	Coordination and monitoring Data collection

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Prevention	Law	Support	Housing
	Guaranteeing the right to housing	Organisation of winter accommodation	
Support for tenants in difficulty	Guaranteeing the right to housing Ensuring access to healthcare Combating discrimination	Harm reduction Debt mediation Professional integration	Building affordable housing Development of social housing agencies Housing First
Housing benefits		Personalised support	Subsidised housing Creation of social housing Housing First
Detection of risk situations Rapid rehousing programmes		Personalised support	Subsidised housing Housing construction and renovation Housing First
Support for tenants in difficulty Preventing rental evictions	Guaranteeing the right to housing Prioritising access to social housing	Development of the referral system Personalised support	Creation of social housing Development of social housing agencies Housing First
Housing benefits Preventing redundancies	Ensuring access to healthcare Combating discrimination Decriminalisation	Revision of accommodation standards Professional integration	Building affordable housing Housing First
Detection of risk situations	Combating discrimination	Development of street work Creation of accommodation facilities Professional integration	Subsidised housing Creation of social housing
Strengthening tenants' rights Support for tenants in difficulty	Prioritising access to social housing Social housing reform Ensuring access to healthcare	Revision of accommodation standards Creation of accommodation facilities Personalised support	Creation of social housing Building affordable housing Housing First
Preventing family estrangement	Ensuring access to social benefits Guaranteeing the right of residence	Emergency social assistance Assistance with domiciliation	Housing First
Housing benefits Debt prevention Preventing rental evictions	Legal support services Combating stigmatisation	Development of the referral system Personalised support Attention to specifc vulnerabilities	Creation of social housing Building affordable housing Housing First
Debt prevention Preventing rental evictions Support on release from prison	Combating stigmatisation	Development of street work Revision of accommodation standards	Creation of social housing Housing First
	Ensuring access to social benefits Ensuring access to healthcare Guaranteeing the rights of foreign nationals	Creation of accommodation facilities Personalised support Professional integration	
Detection of risk situations Preventing rental evictions	Ensuring access to social benefits Legal support services Combating stigmatisation	Personalised support Professional integration Attention to specifc vulnerabilities	Subsidised housing Creation of social housing
Detection of risk situations Support for tenants in difficulty Debt prevention	Prioritising access to social housing Ensuring access to social benefits Ensuring access to healthcare	Revision of accommodation standards Harm reduction Professional integration	Housing First
Detection of risk situations Support for women victims of violence Rapid rehousing programmes	Guaranteeing the right to housing Ensuring access to healthcare Legal support services	Personalised support Harm reduction Professional integration	Housing First
Preventing rental evictions	Ensuring access to healthcare	Development of street work Development of the referral system	Housing First

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The documents reviewed vary widely in size and content. Some, such as the **Netherlands**' national action plan on homelessness (*Nationaal Actieplan Dakloosheid*), exclusively targets homelessness, while others, such as **Italy**'s national plan of interventions and social services (*Piano nazionale degli interventi e dei servizi sociali*) covers a much wider remit. The documents also vary in their level of prescriptiveness, i.e. a legal text covering the federal coordination of actions for implementation in **Belgium**, a technical document setting the objectives and measures for housing policy in **Ireland** and an official inventory of existing and potential measures to promote inclusion of homeless people in **Romania**. Furthermore, the list includes long-established strategic plans such as **Finland**'s, as well as very recent programmes, such as

Germany's. It also emerged through this review that the different Member States do not focus on the same aspects of the problem: the table includes, for example, strategies almost entirely focused on access to housing on the one hand, and programmes built mainly around respecting people's rights and fighting discrimination on the other hand. This general overview does not answer essential questions such as according to which criteria are these homelessness programmes being evaluated? And what conditions must be met to establish a proper strategy? And how should their feasibility and effectiveness be measured? Following on from FEANTSA's[34] previous recommendations, the work initiated as part of EPOCH will aim, among other things, to clarify these points and contribute to the solutions[35].

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See infographic in this chapter for an overview of the results.

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Eurostat (2022) – "Population and Housing Census 2021", https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_and_housing_census_2021_%E2%80%93_overview.

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