Homelessness among migrants in Brussels

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Topics

- Impact of ‘humanitarian crisis’ on homeless services
- Profile of homeless migrants
- Implications for services
Methodology

- Homeless census
- Data collection by services
- Winter plan reports
- Activity reports
- Field interviews:
  - Day centres: Bij ons, Diogènes, Latitude Nord, Chauffoir, Jamais sans Toit, La Fontaine.
  - Health service provider: Médecins du Monde
  - Administrative support: Meeting
  - Night shelter: Pierre d’angle.
Data

- Ethical issue concerning collection of data according to nationality
- Data not always fully reliable
- Services collect data in different ways among each other
- The same service has sometimes changed the way to collect data over the years
Homelessness in Brussels

- Census carried out by La Strada since 2008
  - Street count
    - During the first week of November, one hour from 11pm to 12pm
    - In 2016/2017 first time that two street counts (before and during the winter plan) and enquiries pre and post street count were held
  - Number of beneficiaries communicated by services
Evolution of Homelessness in Brussels

Homeless census carried out by La Strada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homeless</th>
<th>Roofless</th>
<th>Rough sleepers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2603</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3386</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4094</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of 2016 homeless census

Homeless people in Brussels
Source: La Strada, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-conventional structures</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious communities</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed occupations</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough sleepers</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency accommodation</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless accommodation</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In hospitals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Roofless
- Houseless
- Insecure/inadequate housing
Results of 2016 homeless census

- 783 homeless people more than 2014 (+30%)
- 295 rough sleepers more than 2014 (+72%)
- 38%, 1294 individuals sleeping rough or living in squats, do not receive support
- 25% are in accommodation for homeless people (45% in 2008, 40% in 2010, 31% in 2014)
Enquiries pre and post street count 2016

- 174 people in the pre and 123 in the post were interviewed
- In the pre-street count 30 people were migrants in transit (17%)
- 40.7% (pre) and 38.2% (post) were irregularly residing migrants
- 7.6% (pre) and 4.1% (post) were asylum seekers
- Irregularly residing migrants are particularly vulnerable to lack of income and rough sleeping
Results of 2017 homeless census

Homeless people in Brussels
Source: La Strada, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rough sleepers</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency accommodation</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter plan</td>
<td>1013</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless accommodation</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-conventional structures</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious communities</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed occupations</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Roofless
- Houseless
- Inadequate/insecure housing

1963, 48%
Results of 2017 homeless census

- The winter plan provides 1,350 beds in 4 shelters
  - 3 funded by the Brussels Region
  - 1 specifically for irregularly residing migrants funded by the Federal Government
- Huge number of rough sleepers (511) despite additional shelters
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

Administrative status
Source: La Strada pre-street count, 2016

- Belgians: 37%
- Mobile EU citizens: 12%
- Refugees: 1%
- Asylum seekers: 2%
- Irregularly residing: 1%
- Other: 1%
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

Administrative status
Source: La Strada, post street count 2017

- Belgians: 42%
- Mobile EU citizens: 12%
- Refugees: 7%
- Asylum seekers: 31%
- Irregularly residing: 6%
- Other: 2%

Source: La Strada, post street count 2017
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

Income according to administrative status
Source: La Strada, 2017

- No income
  - Belgians (N = 55)
  - Mobile EU citizens, refugees, asylum seekers, others (N = 22)
  - Irregularly residing (N = 66)

- Undeclared work
  - Belgians (N = 55)

- Minimum income
  - Mobile EU citizens, refugees, asylum seekers, others (N = 22)

- Social security
  - Irregularly residing (N = 66)

- Work with contract

Source: La Strada, 2017

Belgians (N = 55)
Mobile EU citizens, refugees, asylum seekers, others (N = 22)
Irregularly residing (N = 66)
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

Housing situation according to administrative status
Source: La Strada, 2017

- **Belgians (N = 56)**
- **Mobile EU citizens, refugees, asylum seekers, others (N = 22)**
- **Irregularly residing (N = 68)**
Enquiries pre and post street count 2017

- 25,000 places in centres for asylum seekers
- Social rights of migrants under pressure
- Very challenging for social workers to find adequate solutions for migrants
- Homelessness among asylum seekers and irregularly residing migrants not new
- Issue not only among newcomers
  - In 2009, 20,500 migrants applied for regularisation
  - More than 100,000 irregularly residing (Migratiecoalitie)
- Homelessness among mobile EU citizens very significant too
Migrants in Emergency accommodation

- 439 places in emergency accommodation, of which 292 in Samusocial and 48 in Pierre d’Angle

Samusocial beneficiaries (2014 – 2016)

- 2014:
  - Belgians: 23.50%
  - TCNs: 34.90%
  - Mobile EU citizens: 39.30%
  - NI: 2.30%

- 2015:
  - Belgians: 21.70%
  - TCNs: 34.90%
  - Mobile EU citizens: 40.10%
  - NI: 3.30%

- 2016:
  - Belgians: 22.10%
  - TCNs: 35%
  - Mobile EU citizens: 39%
  - NI: 3.90%
Migrants in Emergency accommodation

Focus on mobile EU citizens in Samusocial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Romanians</th>
<th>Slovaks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHANGING PROFILES OF HOMELESSNESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICES.
BARCELONA, September 22nd, 2017
Migrants in Emergency accommodation

New beneficiaries at Pierre d’Angle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Algeria</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Tunisia</th>
<th>Romania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Migrants in emergency accommodation

Pierre d’Angle data about new arrivals

- No verification of information provided regarding nationality
- In 2016 Indians (70) and Syrians (42) among the 6 nationalities most represented
- Less new arrivals of Polish nationality but many beneficiaries among the old ones
Migrants in the winter plan

Proportion of beneficiaries in Samusocial according to nationality

Belgians | TCNs | Mobile EU | Stateless | NI
Migrants in the winter plan

Beneficiaries in Samusocial according to nationality

Belgians  TCNs  Mobile EU  Stateless

2014/2015: 823  1708  864
2015/2016: 976  2342  941  1
2016/2017: 888  2992  1041  14
Families in the winter plan

Number of families hosted by Samusocial
Impact of the humanitarian crisis

- Depending on whether we include ETHOS operational category 5 (People in accommodation for immigrants)

- Asylum seekers have access to accommodation and beneficiaries of international protection access to minimum income and housing support

- Role of Samusocial in providing accommodation
  - Since 2010, Samusocial delegated by the Federal Agency to host asylum seekers who do not have housing solutions → accommodation centre opened in Ixelles (250 places)
  - Role of Samusocial at the end of 2015 during the peak → second accommodation centre opened (400 places)
  - Since July 2016, reduction of capacity – two centres of 250 places each, one for asylum seekers and the other of ‘transit’
Impact of the humanitarian crisis

- No evidence of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection sleeping rough
- Low number of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection using day centres
- Vulnerability to homelessness for rejected refugees
- Overall, humanitarian crisis led to significant and increasing number of migrants in transit
Profile of homeless migrants

Main groups:
- Irregularly residing migrants but also with precarious administrative status
- Migrants in transit
- Mobile EU citizens
  → Increasing number of Roma
Profile of homeless migrants

- Irregularly residing migrants
  - Increasing number sleeping rough
  - Many of them are Maghreb nationals although proportionally there is an increase of Sub-Saharan nationals
  - Their objective is to stay in Belgium
  - Often young, in working age, they normally speak one of the two national languages
  - Being undocumented and homeless for several years affect their health and likelihood to be socially included
Profile of homeless migrants

- Migrants in transit
  - Migratory movements from one country to another, in life threatening and dehumanizing conditions
  - Unable or unwilling to pay a smuggler in Calais increasingly turning to Belgium since 2016
  - Number increasing over the past months, especially since the dismantlement of Calais Camp in October 16
Profile of homeless migrants

- Migrants in transit
  - Do not intend to stay
  - Only looking for basic services:
    - Plugs to recharge smartphones
    - Water, coffee, some food, clothes
    - Showers and toilets
    - Health issues – treatment of skin infections
    - Legal advice
Profile of homeless migrants

- Mobile EU citizens
  - Lack of clarity concerning administrative status and access to social benefits
  - Precarious working conditions / in and out of job / no working contract
  - There might be alcohol abuse, violence, health issues.
  - Polish citizens often single men – Roma often in families → needs might be very different
  - 75% of families supported by Samusocial mobile teams, more than 50% arrived in 2016
Profile of homeless migrants

- Mobile EU citizens – focus on Roma:
  - Those who have been residing for several years often living in overcrowded dwellings with begging as main source of income
  - Roofless Roma, recently arrived after moving within the EU:
    - Sleeping rough in the city centre, often with children
    - Living in shanty towns, recently created
    - Using services provided through the winter plan
Implications for services

- Heterogeneity of migrant groups makes difficult to develop targeted solutions
- Social workers struggle to find durable solutions for irregularly-residing migrants
- Difficult to refer certain categories of vulnerable migrants to other services
- Difficult to engage with migrants in transit since they do not intend to stay in Belgium
Implications for services

- Competition among groups of beneficiaries that sometimes lead to open conflicts
- Difficult to handle an increasing number of beneficiaries
- Pressure from the State → new law that would jeopardise the principle of unconditionality
- Collection of useful data can put at risk the respect of the principle of unconditionality
Implication for policy makers

At national level
- legal channels to reside regularly, also as economic migrants
- Facilitate access to address of reference
- Targeted services for migrants in transit

At EU level
- Develop the legal framework on economic migration
- Coordinating internal movement of people seeking international protection
- Develop the existing legal framework on free movement
Thanks for your attention

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