

## 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, FRIDAY

11h30 – 12h50

SEMINAR SESSION 3 - Participants will be asked to select one of these 6 parallel seminars

### Seminar 16: Migration and Homelessness (Room: X) - Chair: Volker Busch-Geertsema, DE

#### Dion Kramer, Annie Berendsen, Jan de Vries, NL: Mobilising the Rights of EU Citizens Experiencing Homelessness: Obstacles and Dynamics of Social Change in the Netherlands

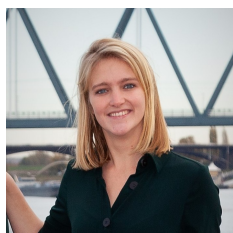
A substantial part of the people sleeping rough in many European cities are nationals from other EU Member States. This presentation will combine the findings of various research projects to explore the case of homeless EU citizens in the Netherlands and the mobilization of their rights to access homelessness support services. Until recently, Dutch municipalities systematically denied EU citizens access to overnight shelters and general homelessness services on equal footing as Dutch citizens by marking them as so-called niet-rechthebbenden ("non-rightholders"). This has most probably led to a denial of rights to EU citizens entitled to shelter as permanent residents, (former) workers, or otherwise legally residing EU citizens. The presentation will:

- 1) Offer a (brief) overview of the rights EU citizens enjoy when experiencing homelessness in another Member State. This discussion relies on legal research into the right to residence, right to equal treatment and protection against expulsion under EU law.
- 2) Explore the context and motivations that led a broad coalition of actors in the Netherlands to join efforts and consider various avenues to legally mobilize the rights of EU citizens experiencing homelessness, including strategic litigation. This part draws on participatory research and elite interviewing.
- 3) Present the results of a research project conducted by De Regenboog Groep which sought to map the backgrounds and conditions of EU citizens experiencing homelessness in Amsterdam and examine how many should be entitled to homelessness support in accordance with the right to equal treatment under EU law and national legislation. This research analyzed the situation of 176 homeless EU citizens, by interviewing social workers on a randomized selection of their caseloads.

The presentation will conclude by offering reflections on the various pathways to generate social change for homeless EU citizens by means of legal mobilisation and reflect on the social and political consequences of recognizing their rights for (local) homelessness support and their limits.



**Dion Kramer** works as Assistant Professor of EU law at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He teaches courses and conducts research on the law and politics of European integration, with a specific focus on EU free movement and the welfare state. In 2024, he received a Veni grant by the Dutch Research Council to research the rights of homeless EU citizens and explain how local governments in the Netherlands and other EU Member States reorganise their homelessness support programmes in response to the growing numbers of homeless EU citizens.



**Annie Berendsen** works as a research coordinator for De Regenboog Groep, an organization in Amsterdam that helps people who are homeless, have psychiatric problems, addictions, or live in poverty. In her role she connects research to practice, using her background of interdisciplinary research to bring together different domains. Annie's recent research focuses on homeless EU citizens in Amsterdam, shedding light on their rights and the conditions in which these people reside in the city.



**Jan de Vries** is co-director of *Straat Consulaat*, an advocacy and support organisation on homelessness in The Hague. Jan has worked, for 25 years, in the field of human rights and advocacy in various positions. He has practical experience and theoretical understanding of advocacy and human rights, having developed and implemented, trained and advised on, advocacy strategies and human rights. For 8 years now he has been working on the right to housing and homelessness in The Netherlands. Besides being co-director of *Straat Consulaat* he is a board member of *Straatalliantie*, an advocacy and support organisation on homelessness in Amsterdam.

## **Miroslava Hlincikova, Martina Wilsch, SK: Housing as a Critical Precondition for Stability: Ukrainian Refugees in Slovakia**

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has displaced over 120,000 Ukrainians, primarily women, children, and older adults, seeking temporary protection in Slovakia. Housing has emerged as a critical challenge, with initial state responses including ad-hoc solutions and a housing subsidy for property owners renting to refugees. However, these measures have not fully addressed the marginalisation of refugees or their vulnerability due to the temporary nature of their legal status. The housing allowance remains uncertain and subject to continuous change.

Despite Slovakia's Housing Policy until 2030 recognising migrants and refugees as disadvantaged groups, Ukrainian refugees are excluded from public rental housing. This exclusion, combined with an unaffordable private market, forces many into precarious living conditions, affecting social integration, community ties, and personal agency. Slovakia lacks a long-term vision for refugee housing and has no systemic approach to preventing housing loss, leaving many at risk of homelessness.

Using frameworks from the anthropology of home, epistemic injustice (Medina, 2018), and the ethnography of deservingness (Tarkiainen, 2023; Streinzer, Tošić, 2022), this paper examines how displaced individuals navigate social, economic, and political landscapes to secure housing. Based on ongoing ethnographic research conducted from February 2024 to May 2025 in Bratislava, it explores the impact of housing precarity and legal temporariness on Ukrainian refugees' life trajectories.

The authors argue that the Slovak state rigidly defines vulnerability, basing housing policies on restrictive eligibility rather than data on at-risk groups. The exclusion of individual circumstances in housing allowance regulations exacerbates insecurity and reinforces the sense of liminality for refugees. This paper highlights the need for a more flexible and inclusive approach to refugee housing to prevent further social marginalisation.



**Mgr. Miroslava Hlinčíková, PhD.** is a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, where she earned her PhD in 2013. Her research focuses on social exclusion, integration, and human rights, particularly in relation to disadvantaged groups, including migrants, minorities, and women. She has been part of numerous research teams exploring diversity, inequality, and urban inclusion issues. Beyond academia, she collaborates as an analyst with various NGOs and actively contributes to the local initiative *Kubik* in Trnava, where she co-organizes socio-cultural events to foster community engagement and inclusion.



**Martina Wilsch, PhD,** is an anthropologist working as a senior researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In her research, she focuses on transnational family practices, transnational care, migration, care, gender, and migrant integration, and more recently, on the care and social reproduction in displaced Ukrainian families, alongside exploring the role of cultural practices in incorporation processes in displacement. She has academic research experience and applied research for the non-governmental sector, public institutions, and national and international organisations.