



Homelessness in EU cities and towns

**16th European Research Conference on Homelessness
Bergamo, 22-23rd September 2022**

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Europe trending upwards

Approximately 700.000 homeless people on the streets or in shelters on any given night in the EU

HOMELESSNESS IN EUROPE: AN ALARMING PICTURE

LOCATION - NON-COMPARABLE - NON-EXHAUSTIVE OF ALARMING TRENDS IN HOMELESSNESS IN EUROPE



GREAT-BRITAIN
LONDON



THE NETHERLANDS



LUXEMBOURG



IRELAND
DUBLIN



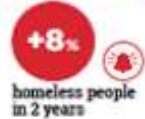
BELGIUM
BRUSSELS



SPAIN



SPAIN
BARCELONA



FRANCE



FINLAND



LITHUANIA



GERMANY



ITALY



DENMARK



POLAND



AUSTRIA



GREECE
ATHENS



Evidence from across Europe points to a worsening homelessness situation. Finland is the only exception, showing the effectiveness of implementing a long-term homelessness strategy.

WARNING: These statistics are not comparable. The situations described, the sources (official as far as possible), the periods of time and the methodologies are different and specific to each of the countries concerned. Details and explanations regarding the data are available in the following pages.



Challenges and expectations in the EU

- **The full effects of COVID-19 pandemic are not clear yet, but there is cause for concern.**
- **The effects of the war in Ukraine**
- **The profile of the homeless population has been changing and now includes more young people and children, migrants, Roma and other disadvantaged minorities. Women and families are increasingly at-risk of homelessness.**
- **A EUrobarometer (2021) finds that 9/10 Europeans consider a social Europe to be important to them personally, and 7/10 consider a lack of social rights a serious problem. EUbarometer indicated that people feel that the number one issue the EU should focus on is reducing poverty and social inequality for EU citizens.**

European initiatives

“Adequate, accessible, safe and affordable housing [...] should meet the needs of different groups in society, including an ageing and more diverse population, persons with disabilities, young people and families “ (New Leipzig Charter)

Two concrete deliverables of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

- European Platform on Combatting Homelessness
- Affordable Housing Initiative

Safe Home initiative

The **European Social Fund (ESF+)**

European Regional Development Fund

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

InvestEU (through its “**Social Investment and Skills Window**”)

Council Recommendation on the **Child Guarantee**

Member States have primary responsibility to address homelessness

Adopt long-term, housing-led, integrated homelessness strategies and introduce efficient policies to prevent evictions.

Different definitions

ETHOS light:

- People living rough
- Emergency accommodation
- Accommodation for the homeless
- Institutions
- Non-conventional dwellings
- Family and friends

Different data collection methods

- Street count
- Service use
- Administrative records
- Surveys
- ...

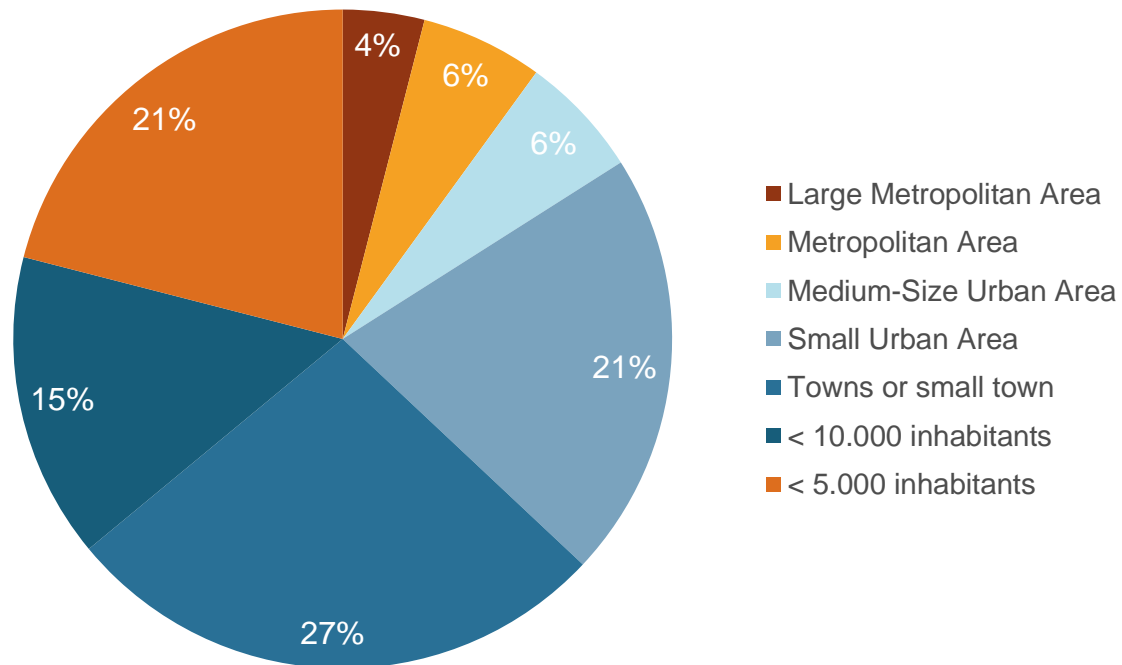
JRC study

- JRC EU survey (supported by FEANTSA and EUROCIITIES) spring/summer 2021.
- **Objective:** get a better understanding of the phenomenon of homelessness, data collection & policies, developments during the pandemic, and potential policy implications
- **133 respondents from 16 Member States**
- Specific feature: Cities and smaller towns



Urban classifications and homelessness

Urban classifications

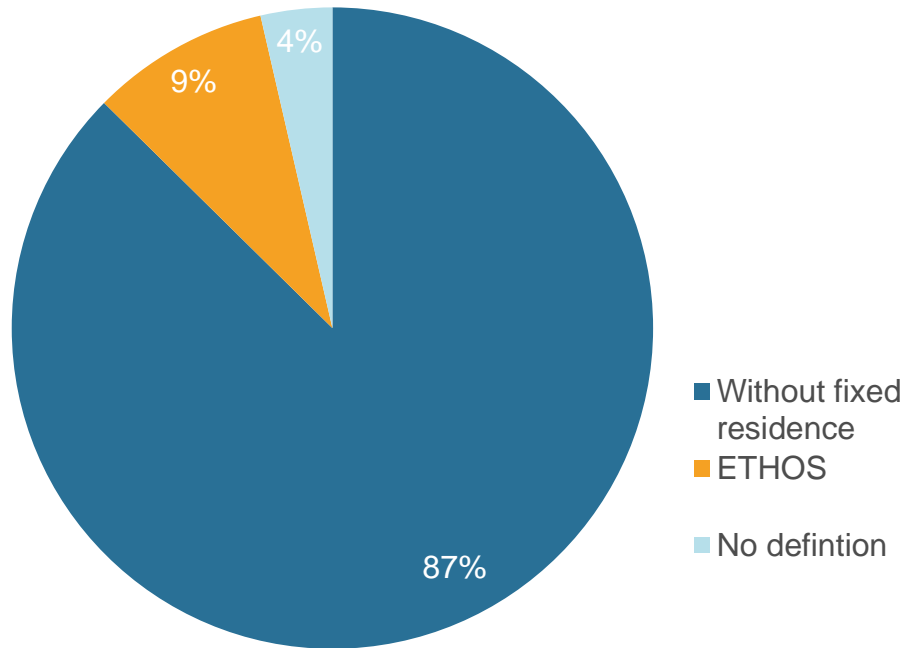


- Total population covered: almost 37 million
- Total homeless persons: 41.280
- Total share of population homeless: approx 0.13%
- Values between 0 and 0.95%
- Moderate positive relationship

%

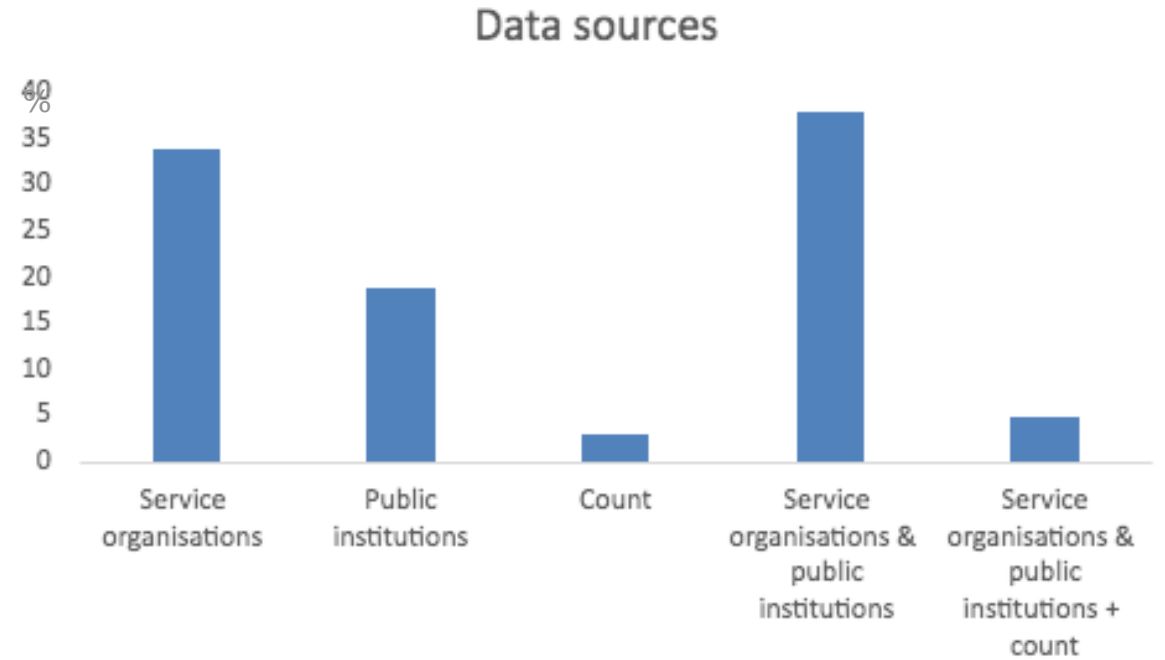
Definitions and data sources: a signal

Definition of 'homeless'



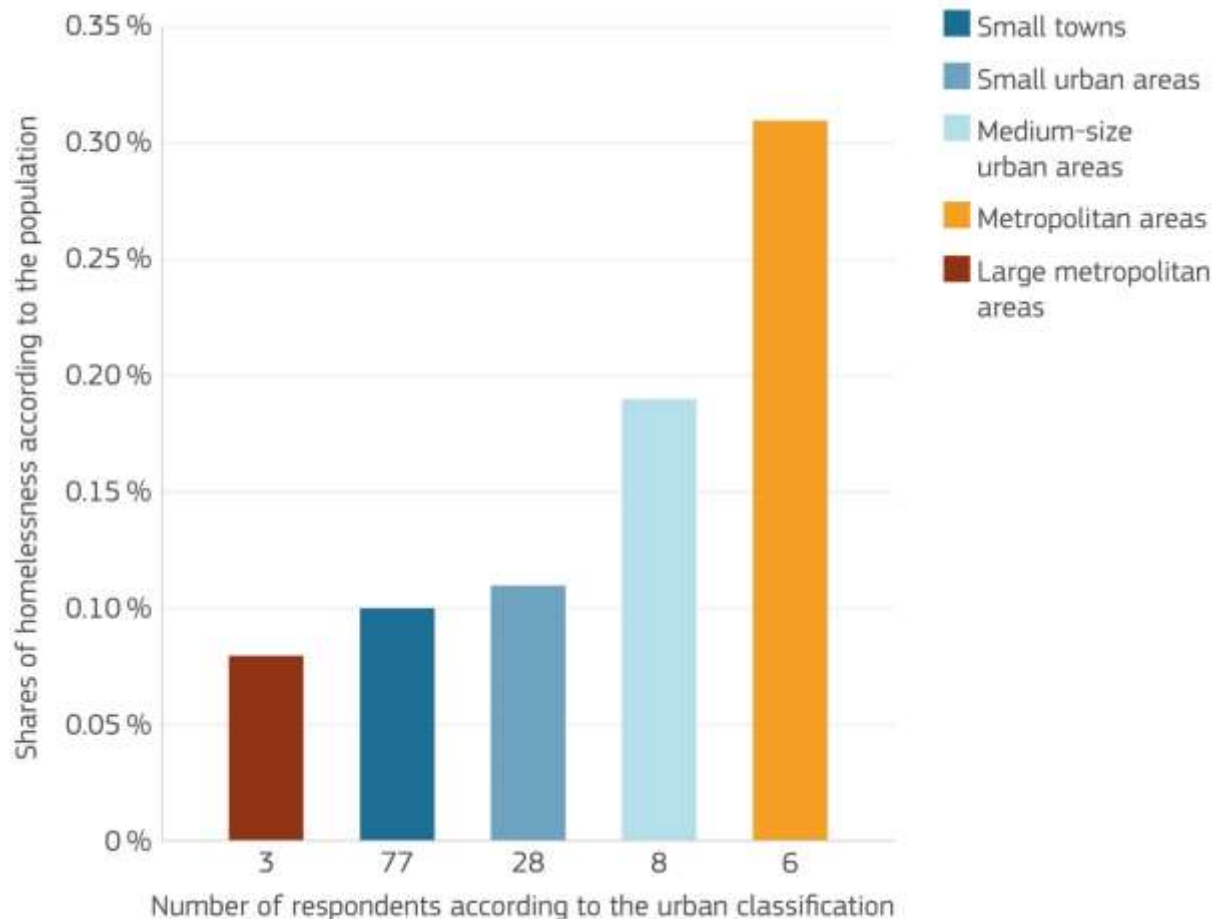
N = 114

Data collection methods



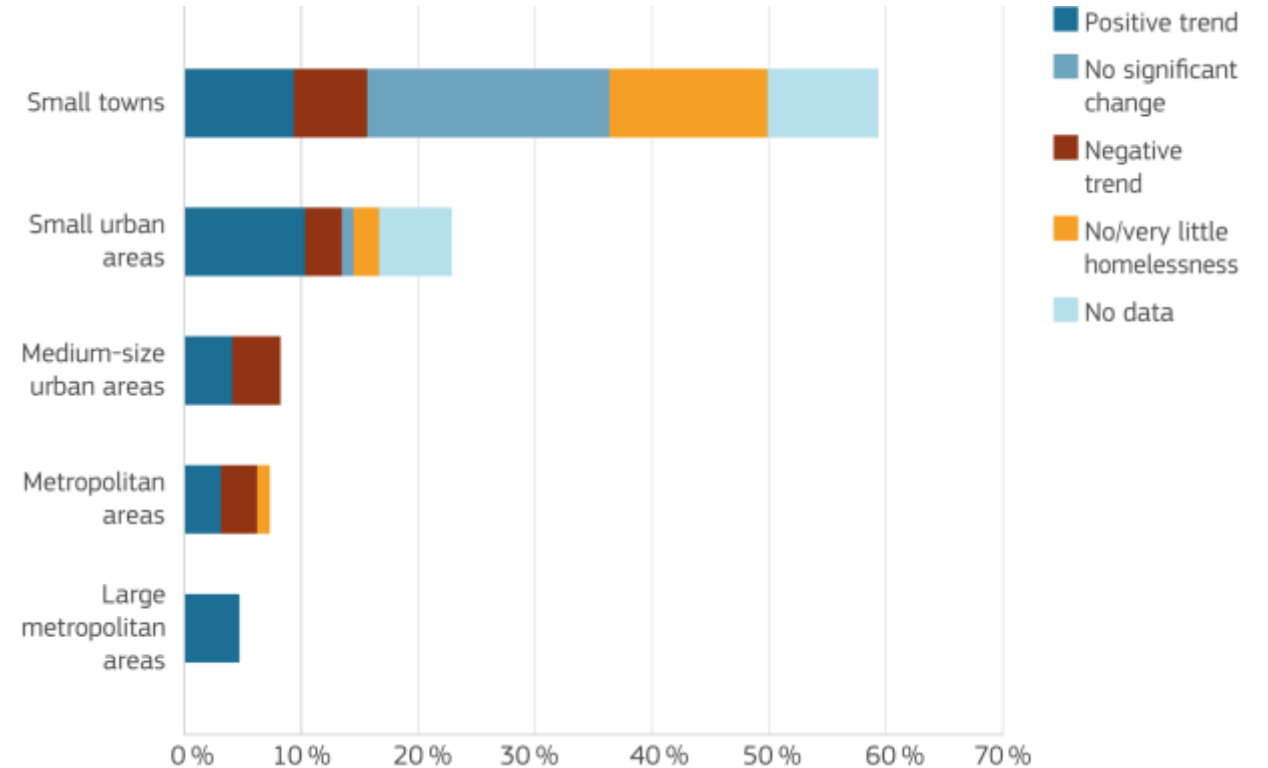
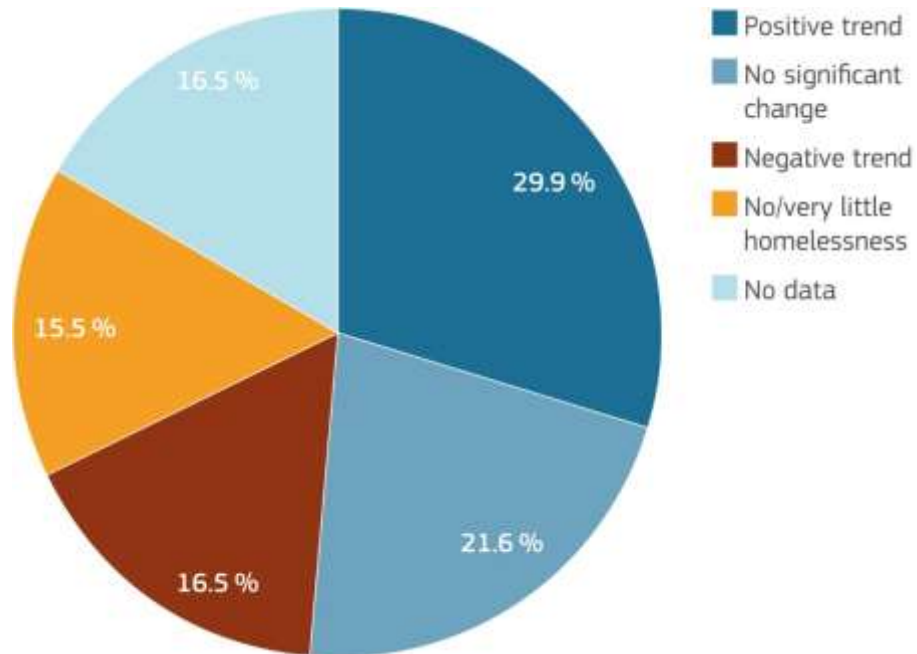
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Urban classifications and homelessness



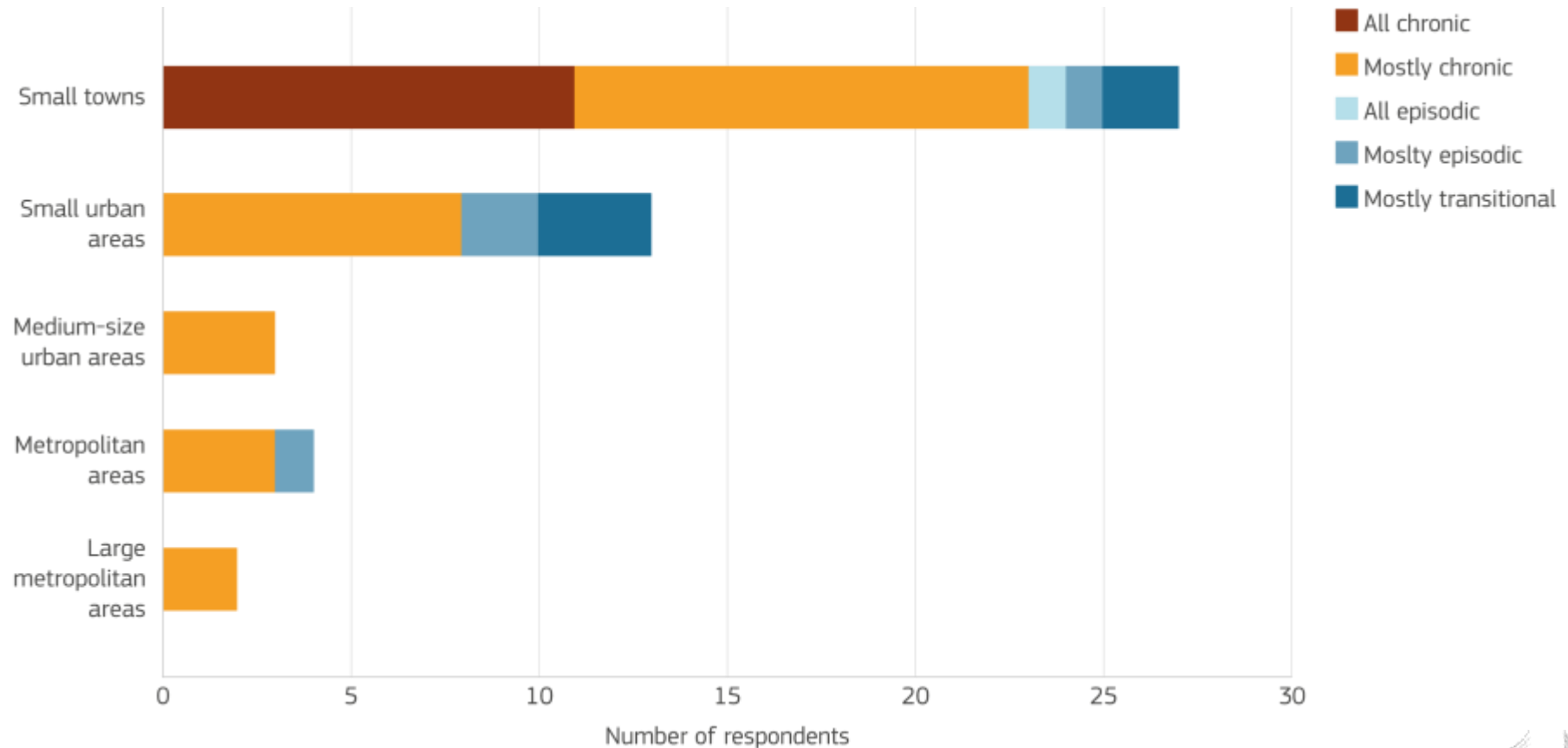
- Places with low population numbers, are more likely to have zero homelessness.
- 64.2% of the towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants, currently experience no homelessness at all.
 - stigma/migration
 - definition/measurement
- In large metropolitan areas homeless people tend to remain close services and public spaces, while the (sub)urban fringes drive up population numbers.

Trends and profiles before the pandemic



Trends and profiles

Main homelessness profile per urban classification (n = 49)



Social/public housing

In almost 50% of the cities, people who experience homelessness can access social/public housing (n= 101), this rises to:

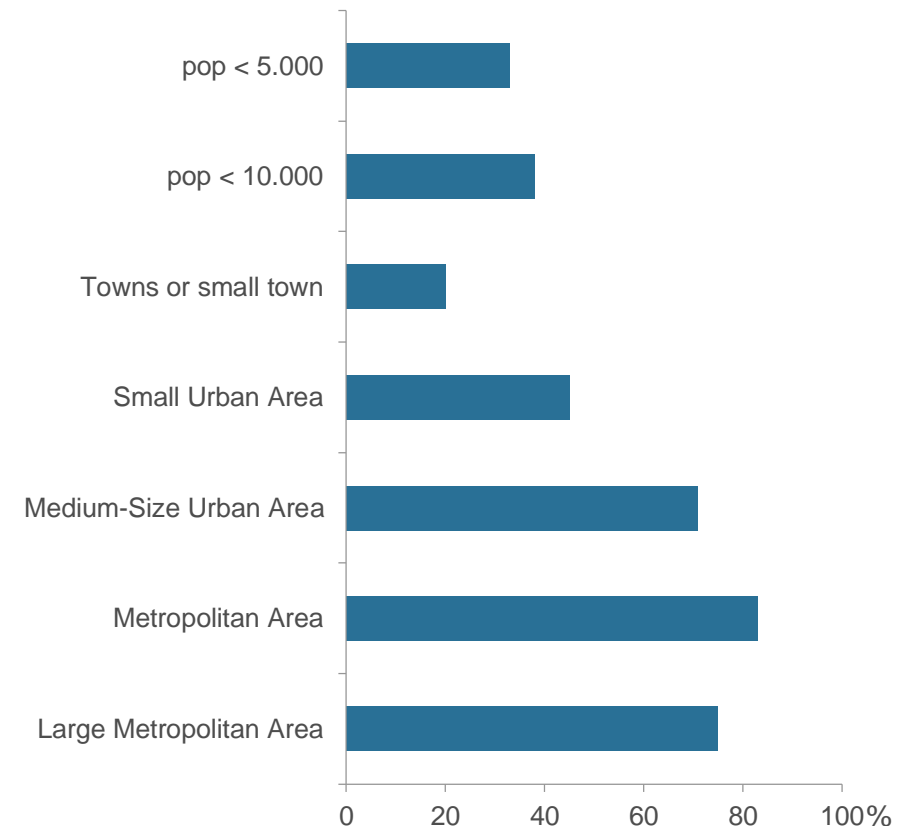
- 75% in the large metropolitan areas
- 83% in metropolitan areas
- 71% in medium-sized urban areas

The average time spent on a waiting list for social/public housing, is mostly 3 to 4 years.

In six cities it takes more than 10 years, concerning two metropolitan areas, one medium sized urban area, one smaller urban area, and two small towns.

Nonetheless, the relationship between the level of social/public housing, and homelessness demands a careful assessment, since some countries have relatively high levels of social/public housing (and related expenditures), and also high levels of homelessness.

Social/public housing available for homeless people per urban classification



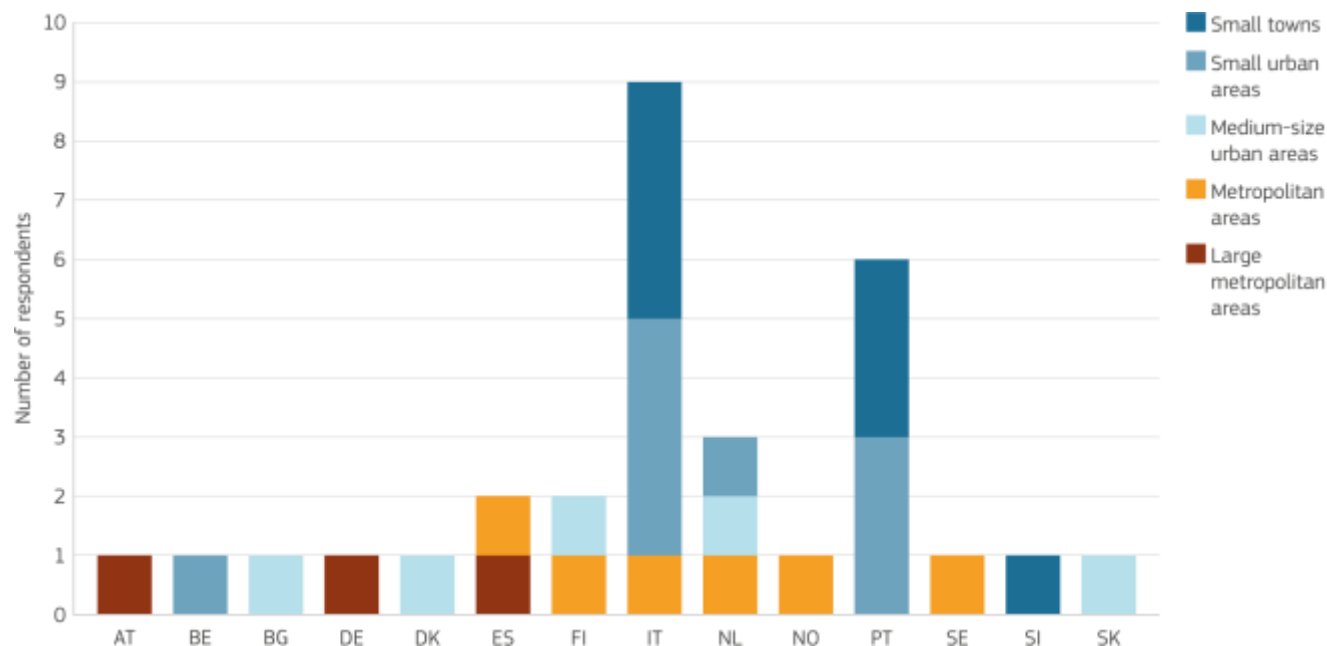
Policies and Housing First

- **Approx. 50% has a specific homelessness strategy**
- Majority embedded in regional/national strategy
- **Almost 26% has implemented Housing First policy**

Housing first initiatives refer to policy that uses housing as a tool for integration, rather than as a reward for the integration process (the staircase model). A Housing First service provides housing as soon as possible.

In 2020, 1678 people have been housed through this approach among the responding cities.

Implementation of housing first by urban classification per country (n=31)



The pandemic and beyond

Trends

- **55% did not observe a substantial increase or decrease**
- **40% observed an increase**
- 5% observed a decrease

Overall increase of number of (young women)

Share of increasing numbers 67% in metropolitan areas

The share of stable numbers the highest in towns or small towns

Biggest challenges in shelters:
Testing and isolation of ill people

General challenge:
Blocking of informal support

Recovery:

Around 39% of the cities state that their pandemic recovery plan includes the issues of housing precarious and homelessness.

From these, around 72% concern smaller urban areas or small towns.

Some main takeaways

- **Strong need for comprehensive EU data collection**, to monitor and provide analytic scientific support for (prevention) policies.
- **Harmonisation of data required**; time interval and methodology/data sources.
- **Look beyond bigger cities**
- Apply policies to the territorial/local context

*Better data and data analyses can make sure we design and implement the most effective public policies for each specific place **to protect target populations from losing their homes***

Urban Data Platform

<https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/thematic-analyses>

- JRC Science for Policy report:
- ***Homelessness in EU cities and towns before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Main challenges and ways forward***
- Van Heerden, S., Proietti, P., and S. Iodice.



Keep in touch



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Thank you



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