

PAOLA PROIETTI

*The Future of Cities policy briefs:
a webinar series*

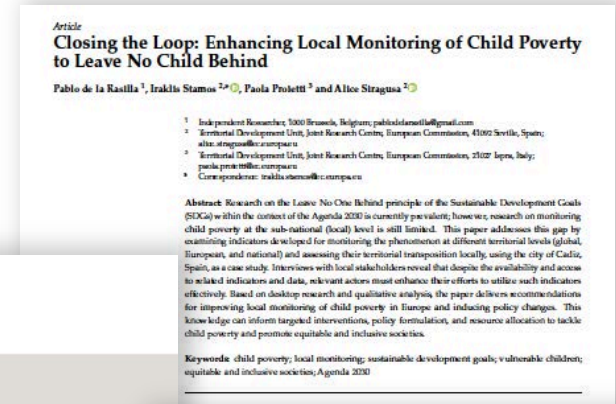


Homelessness in the EU

Exploring data and policy needs

THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024

Previous work inspired by the Leave-No-One-Behind principle



This policy brief

The cover of the policy brief features the European Commission logo at the top center, with the text 'European Commission' below it. To the right, the text 'The future of the cities series' is written in a smaller font. The main title 'Homeless' is written in large, handwritten-style letters on a white piece of paper that is pinned to a wooden surface. Below the title, the subtitle 'The different faces of homelessness: exploring specific data and policy needs' is displayed in a blue font. The cover also includes a list of key findings and an introduction section.

European Commission

SCIENCE FOR POLICY BRIEF

The future of the cities series

Homeless

The different faces of homelessness: exploring specific data and policy needs

- Monitoring homelessness provides a basis for appropriate policy intervention. It is important to consider how different measurement techniques are likely to under- or over-represent various subgroups experiencing homelessness (e.g., women, youth or migrants).
- Support to tackle youth homelessness should take into account their specific needs, offer education and training opportunities, and focus on emotional development.
- The smaller share of women in official homelessness statistics can be partly explained by differences in how homelessness is experienced by women, relative to men; how it is defined in official statistics; and how it is measured.
- Housing First works under a person-centred approach and gives individuals a high degree of choice and control. It provides tailored support that addresses not only housing stability, but also other areas of life that may need attention.

Introduction

The 8th overview of housing exclusion in Europe in 2023 (Fondation Abbé Pierre – FEANSTA) estimated that around 895,000 people sleep rough or stay in night shelters and temporary accommodation in Europe every night. This equals a population comparable to that of a city like Marseille or Turin. The escalating numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness across the continent signal an urgent need for action, as homelessness not only poses a severe risk to the well-being of those affected but also impinges on social cohesion.

Furthermore, homelessness is increasing in the majority of EU Member States, while current numbers are likely to underestimate populations such as migrants, women and youth, who often seek particular forms of shelter, and fly under the radar of common data collection forms, due to fragmented methodologies and the absence of a universally accepted definition of homelessness. This underestimation hinders the ability to respond effectively and necessitates an urgent review and enhancement of how this social issue is monitored.

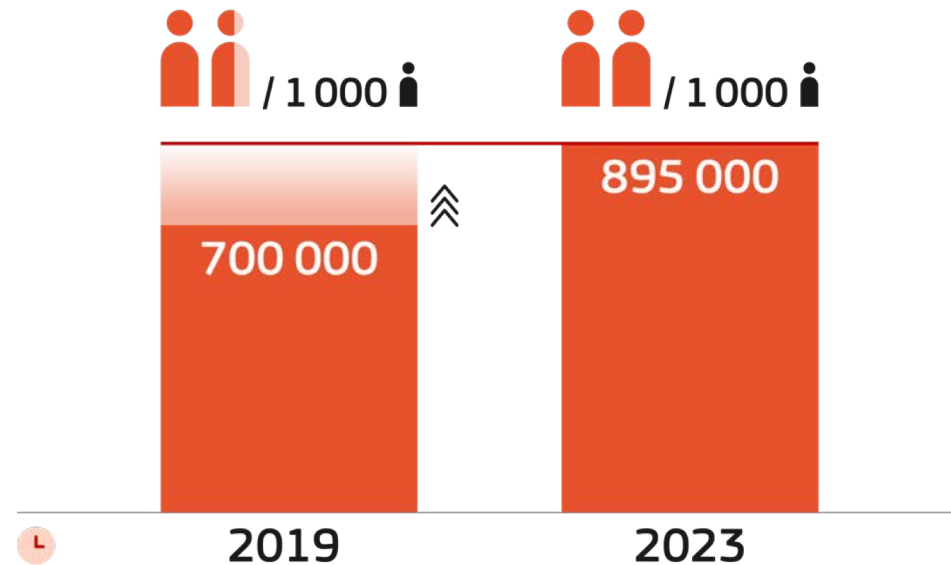
The purpose of this brief is to delineate the complexities of monitoring and measuring homelessness, a critical step towards formulating evidence-based policies. It highlights the

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Joint Research Centre

Homelessness threatens the well-being of those affected with consequences also for social cohesion

Despite an increased commitment in recent years, long-term initiatives and dedicated resources are still needed to improve impact.



In **Europe**, in **2023** around 895 000 people slept rough or stayed in night shelters and temporary accommodation every night vs 700 000 in **2019**.

Source: [Feantsa and the Abbé Pierre Fondation](#)

 These are likely underestimations

Within Europe, many countries rely on the ETHOS definition and the ETHOS Light framework

ETHOS definition

- Rooflessness
- Houselessness
- Living in insecure housing
- Living in inadequate housing

Source: [FEANTSA – Ethos Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion](#)

ETHOS Light framework

1. People living/sleeping rough
2. People in emergency accommodation
3. People living in accommodation for the homeless
4. People leaving institutions
5. People living in non-conventional dwellings
6. People living temporarily with family and friends

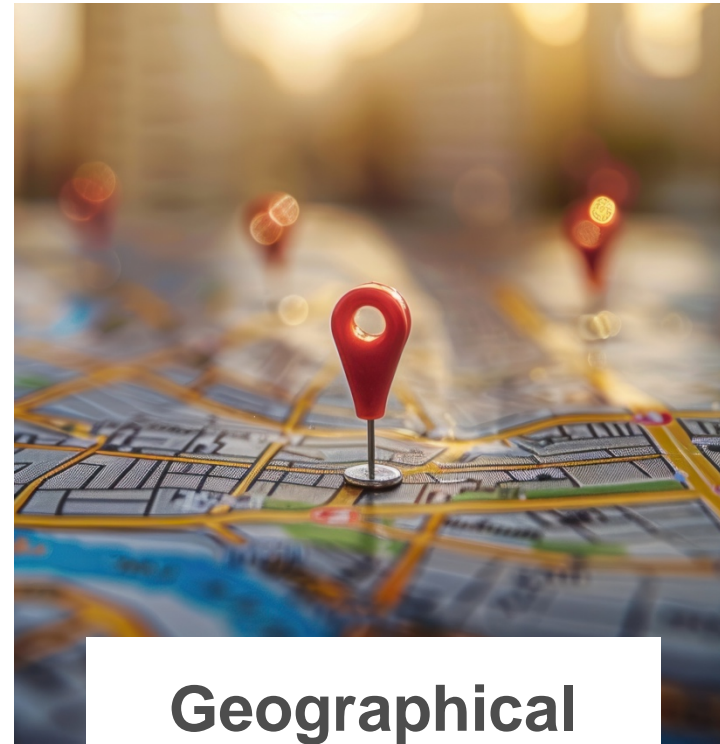


Measurements can differ considerably depending on the coverage of the living conditions included in the ETHOS Light framework

There are other two reasons why homeless people are undercounted



The type of measurement



Geographical coverage

The measurement of homelessness

- **Point-in-time counts:** counting and surveying people sleeping rough and/or in shelters *in a single point in time*.
 - 📍 Paris, Rome, Milan and Madrid
 - **Time-location sampling:** a census of the facilities used by the people experiencing homelessness is followed by a survey of a random sample of users.
 - 📍 France, Spain and Italy
- Time-location sampling and point-in-time methods can be combined.**
- 📍 Germany
- **Capture-recapture:** identifying people experiencing homelessness ‘captured’ in different data sources, typically administrative data.
 - 📍 The Netherlands

The consequences of underestimation: leaving **women** behind

The share of women experiencing homelessness changes substantially across countries (Source: [OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing, 2023](#)).

How is this linked with homelessness' definition and measurement methods?

- Women tend to rely more on **informal support** to find accommodation
- Women experiencing living rough make serious efforts to **conceal** their gender and location
- Women in **shelters for victims of domestic violence** are not included in official homelessness statistics in more than half of OECD countries

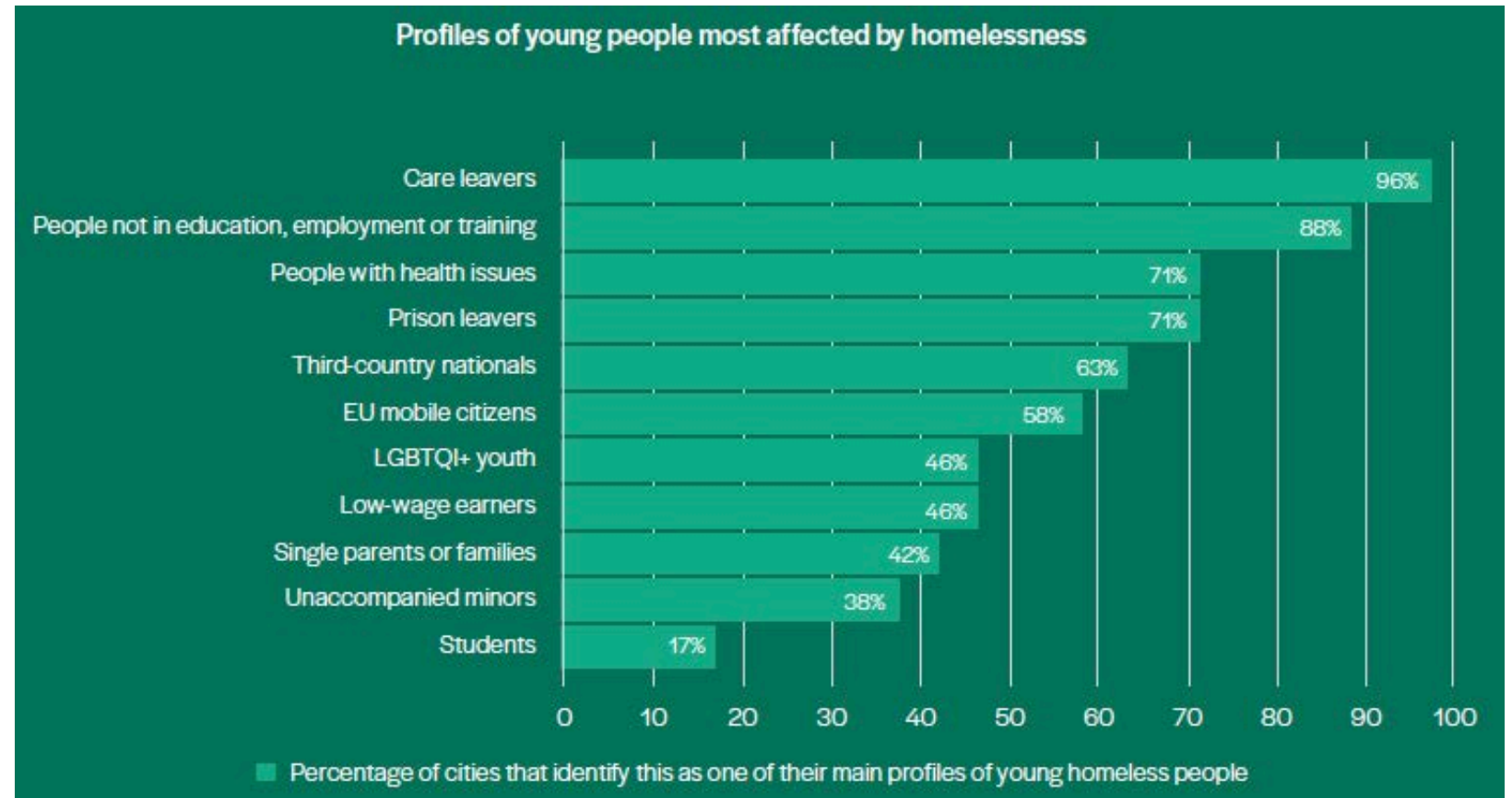
Motivations related with homelessness among women are peculiar therefore support services and protection measures should be designed to address their specific needs.



The consequences of underestimation: leaving **young people** behind

People who experience homelessness at a young age:

- Tend to live **temporarily with family or friends, or in youth hostels:** not always monitored
- Face long-term consequences

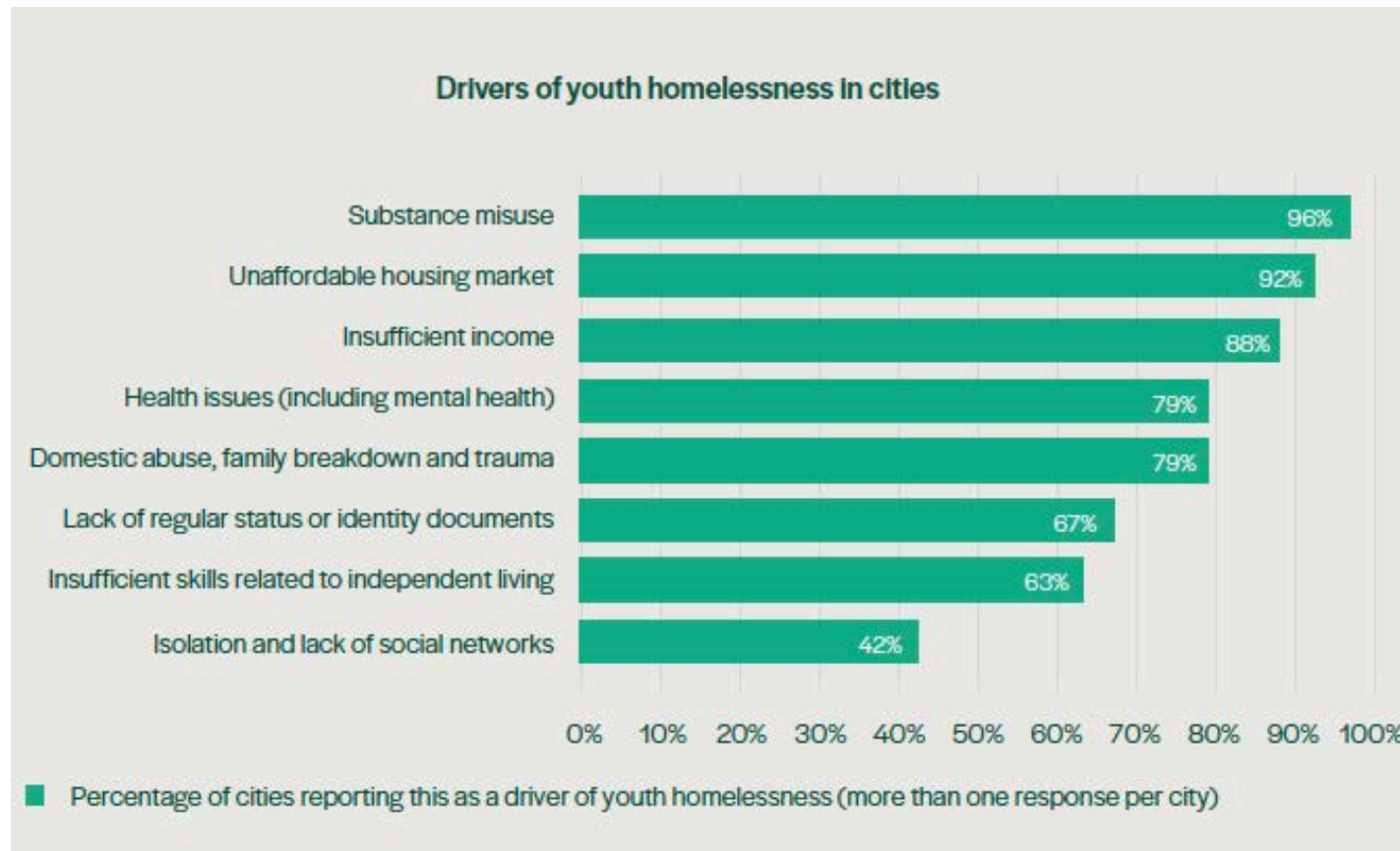


Source: [Eurocities \(2023\) Ending Youth Homelessness in Cities](#)

How can we alleviate youth homelessness?

According to EUROCITIES:

- Recognising its specific drivers
- Preventing
- Reaching out or missing out
- Addressing the inter-connected nature of homelessness
- **Improving housing access**



Source: [Eurocities \(2023\) Ending Youth Homelessness in Cities](#)

Pathways for continued improvement

- **A human rights-based approach**
- **Upscaling what has proven to work:**
 - Universal and specific, upstream prevention
 - **Housing-first model:** providing stable, permanent housing for individuals with complex needs experiencing homelessness as a priority, regardless of their history.
<https://housingfirsteurope.eu>
 - Integrated and personalised services and collaboration between multiple stakeholders
 - Longitudinal and impact analysis



Pathways for continued improvement also require:

- Breaking the stereotype
- Recognize and address the intersectionality of homelessness
- Avoid misuse of data
- Capacity-building among public personnel
- Meaningful participation of people with lived experience
- Support policy measures with adequate funding





The different faces of homelessness: exploring specific data and policy needs

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The policy brief is available here:
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC136178>

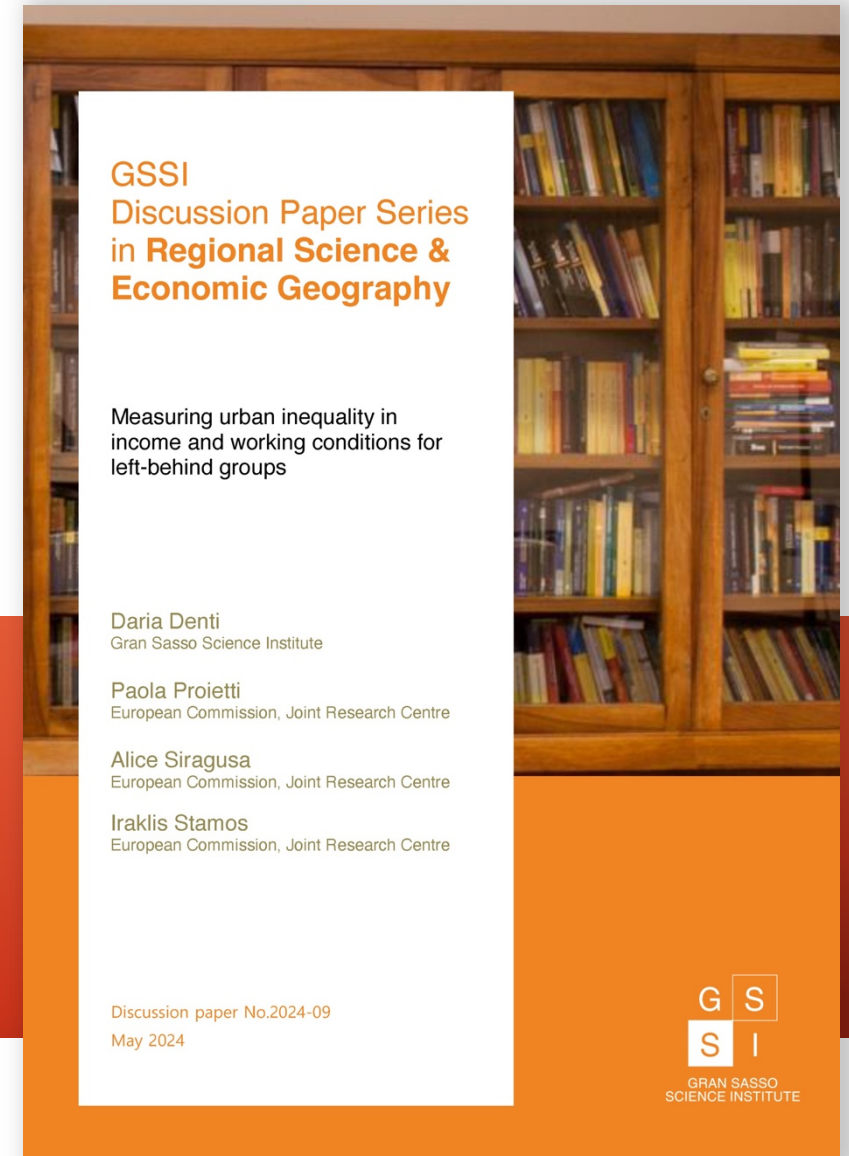
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Other research on homelessness recently published

The paper proposes new urban metrics for inequality in income & working conditions accounting for the geography of homeless & irregular migrants



Thank you



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