

HOMELESSNESS IN HUNGARY

KEY STATISTICS

Since 1999, a survey of homelessness in Hungary is conducted every year on 3 February. Researchers, municipalities and NGO service providers commit on a voluntary basis to the initiative. Initially, it covered only Budapest, but the survey has now been expanded to a growing number of municipalities. In 2018 there were 253 homeless service providers from 78 municipalities across the country. The Third of February Homeless Survey is not a census of all homeless people, nor is it a tool to estimate the number of homeless people. The survey only covers those people who are in touch with shelters or outreach teams who volunteer to take part at the time of the survey.

At national level, there are registers of certain types of homeless services provided under the Social Care Act, but there are a number of limitations regarding the reliability of the data.

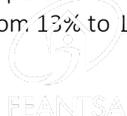
On 3 February 2018, 8,650 homeless people took part in the survey. This included¹:

- People living in public space/outdoors (ETHOS 1.1): 2,350
- People staying in hostels (ETHOS 2.1 and 3.1): 6,300

INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

These figures have remained stable over the years. As it is not a comprehensive head count of homeless people, we cannot draw conclusions concerning the decrease or increase of the number of homeless people.

in a homeless shelter, be it a long-term or short-term stay. The proportion of women as part of the overall homeless population has increased from: 13% to 14%.



Key pull-out statistics

In 2018: 8,650 homeless people
2,350 sleeping rough
6,300 staying in hostels

Source: Third of February Survey

CHANGE IN PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

A recent analysisⁱⁱ suggests a growing percentage of the Roma population among homeless people, especially young homeless people, as well as an increase in people coming from large, impoverished families. Homelessness seems thus to be passed on from generation to generation.

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

There have been two initiatives aimed at a national homelessness strategy.

The first and more comprehensive strategy proposal was drafted in 2008, but was not approved by the government. However, certain elements of it were referred to and implemented by governmental entities. (E.g. those implemented by ESF funding.)

The second strategic document was drafted in 2015 with the involvement of national on homelessness. It defined the most vulnerable groups of homeless people and suggested solutions to their problems. Some of the recommendations of the strategic paper have been incorporated in the relevant legislation regulating homeless service provision.

REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

- Positive

There is ESF funding made available for projects providing Housing First. There are 14 projects offering Housing First services for about a couple of hundreds of homeless people. However, the project span is a maximum of 36 months, thus any initiative has to find independent funding afterwards to sustain results and support people in their housing in the long term.

- **Negative**

The criminalisation of homelessness in Hungary has recently reached its climax, after the amendment of the Hungarian constitution. (See press release for the details.) According to the bill from 15 October homeless people residing in public spaces can easily end up in jail. After the third warning for residing in public places, homeless people will be offered to take public benefit work or will be imprisoned.

Normative state funding for homeless services has remained unchanged for many years for shelters and hostels, or has even been reduced e.g. that of day centres.

Still no progress on the horizon in terms of increasing the affordable proportion of social housing within the housing stock. Housing continues to be defined as a personal problem, with no official support. Local authorities can offer a housing subsidy, which normally does not exceed 10 euros/month.

REFERENCES

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ii www.feantsaresearch.org/download/peter-gyori8798329104366035360.pdf