

Free movement without access to rights?

Confronting homelessness and exclusion in the EU

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Online



Mapping Access to Rights for Destitute Mobile EU Citizens in Europe



Short overview

- **European exercise** – FEANTSA members' expertise
- **Methodology**
 - exploratory questionnaire (September 2024 – January 2025 and updated in early 2026); desktop research + final review.
 - answers from 21 organisations working in 17 countries:
 - 4 sending countries (Poland, Romania, Hungary and Lithuania)
 - 13 receiving countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden).

Key findings

Access to free movement rights is unequal, leaving high numbers of EU citizens in vulnerable situations as they move across Member States in search of better work and life opportunities.

Gaps between law and practice persist, as differences appear in the way in which each Member State implements EU law at national level as well as on the level of knowledge among authorities' employees about the entitlements of EU citizens.

Barriers stemming from the way EU law is interpreted and implemented at national level. result in varied access and the exclusion of EU citizens from social rights and services, including crucial healthcare

Across surveyed countries, destitute mobile EU citizens face restrictive, complex bureaucratic registration rules, leaving many unregistered and thus unable to access the social rights and services they are entitled to.

Key findings

Mobile EU citizens' access to homelessness services (particularly municipal shelter) is fragmented and often conditioned by a person's residence status, habitual residence, access to social assistance, or employment status/ability to return to work.



Criminalisation of destitute mobile EU citizens is widely spread among receiving Member States, actions such as begging or sleeping rough in public spaces being punished with fines or even prison, in some cases.



Discrimination of mobile EU citizens is reported in relation to different rights and services, with Roma mobile EU citizens being particularly affected.



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Thank you!