GENDERED HOMELESSNESS IN EUROPE

Insights from retrospective EU-SILC data

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Utrecht 2025

WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS

AN UNDERREPRESENTED CRISIS

1. The true prevalence of women's homelessness in Europe is still **significantly underestimated**
2. Women and men experience homelessness at **roughly the same rates**, apart from rough sleeping
3. Women make up a **smaller share of the visibly homeless population** but a **larger share of the hidden homeless**
4. As data collection improves, the **gender gap in homelessness prevalence diminishes**

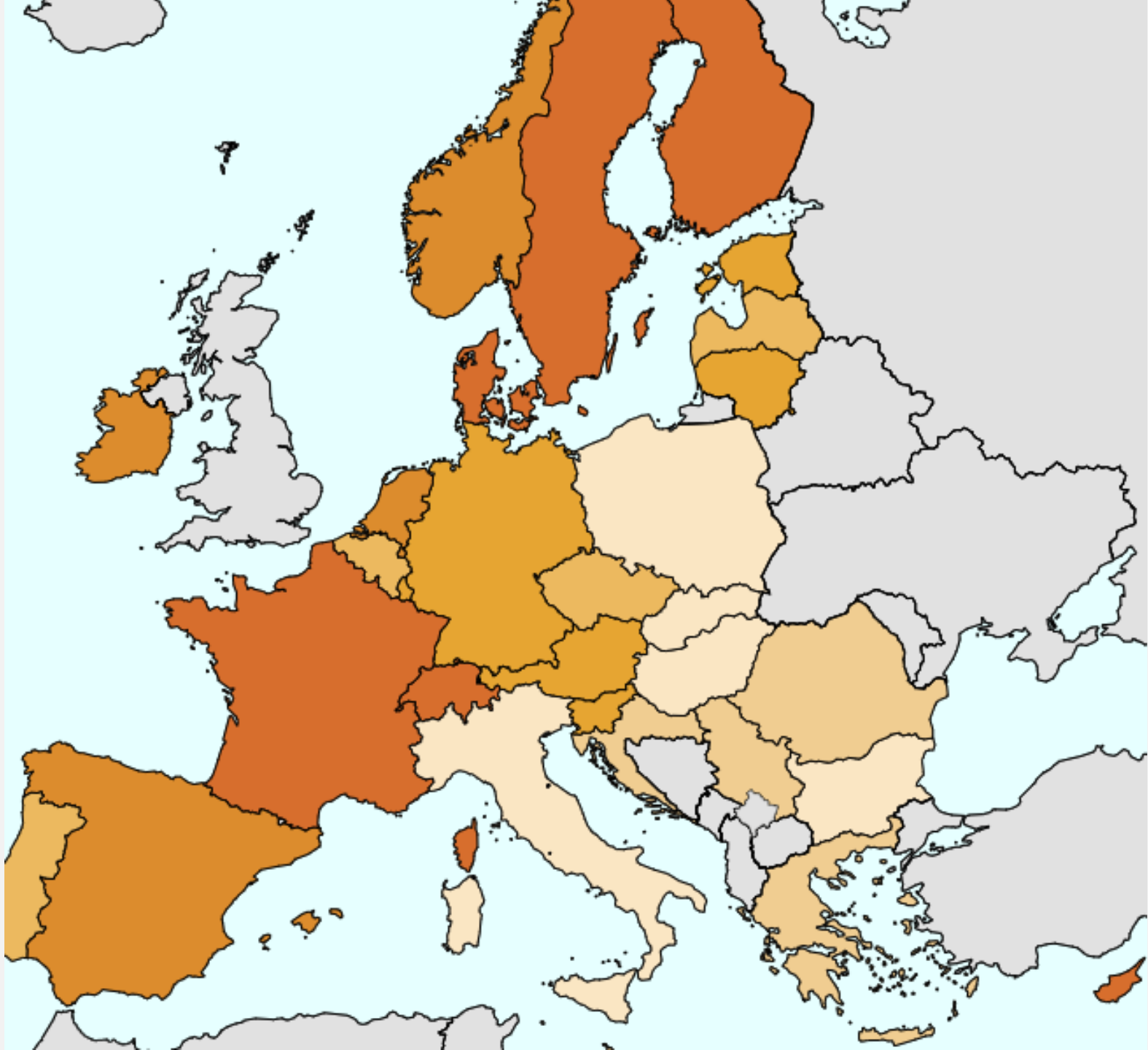
EU STATISTICS ON INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS (EU-SILC)

- **Cross-sectional** and **longitudinal data** across Europe on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions
- **Past experience of housing difficulties** module (2018 and 2023)
- **Retrospective**
- National **probability surveys**
- **Household** survey
- **Limitations**:
  - Differences in **methods** and **sampling frame**
  - **Self-report** data
  - **Cultural differences** in interpretation and different question phrasing
  - **Collective households** are **excluded**
  - Cannot capture most **current homelessness**

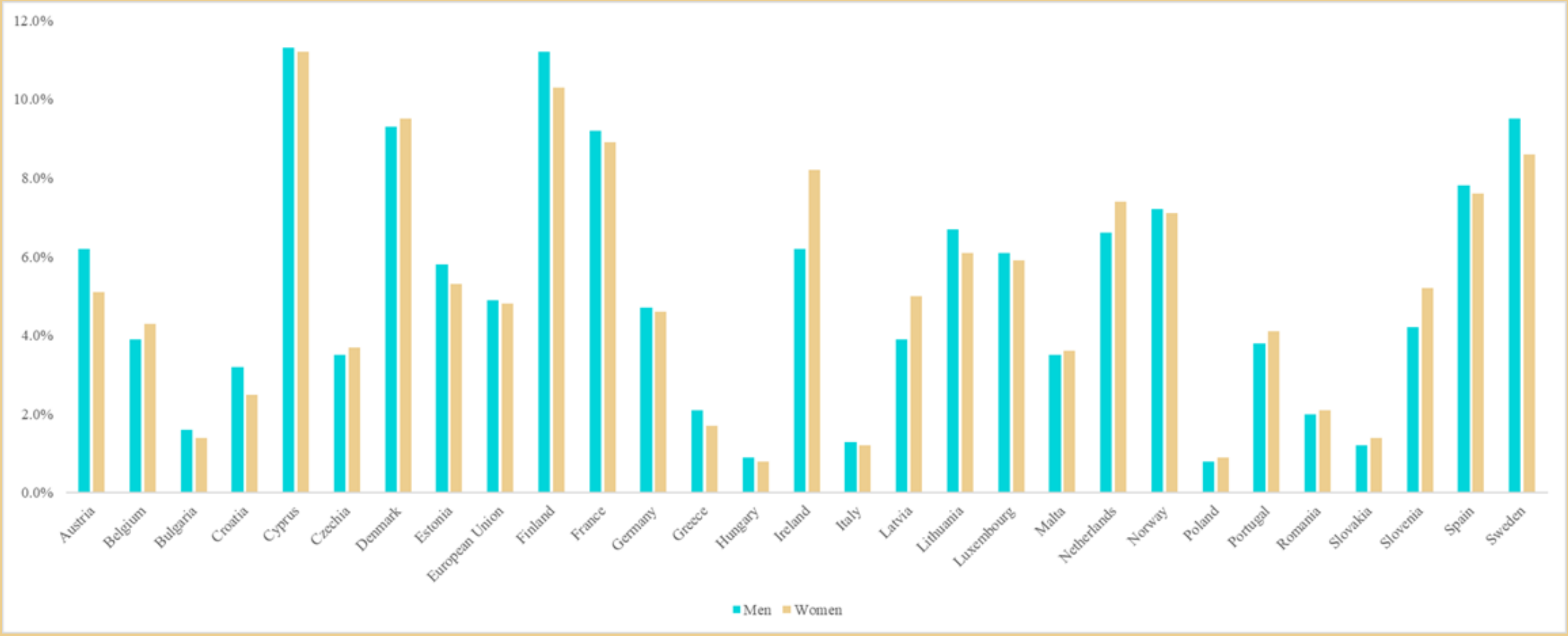
eurostat

"HAVE YOU BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU **DID NOT HAVE YOUR OWN HOME** AND WERE **FORCED TO LIVE WITH, FOR INSTANCE, FAMILY OR FRIENDS** OR HAD **TO SLEEP OUTSIDE**?"

- 2023 EU average: **4.9%** have experienced homelessness
  - Highest: Cyprus: **11.2%**
  - Lowest: Hungary: **0.8%**



GENDER


12.0%
10.0%
8.0%
6.0%
4.0%
2.0%
0.0%
Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czechia
Denmark
Estonia
European Union
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
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Portugal
Romania
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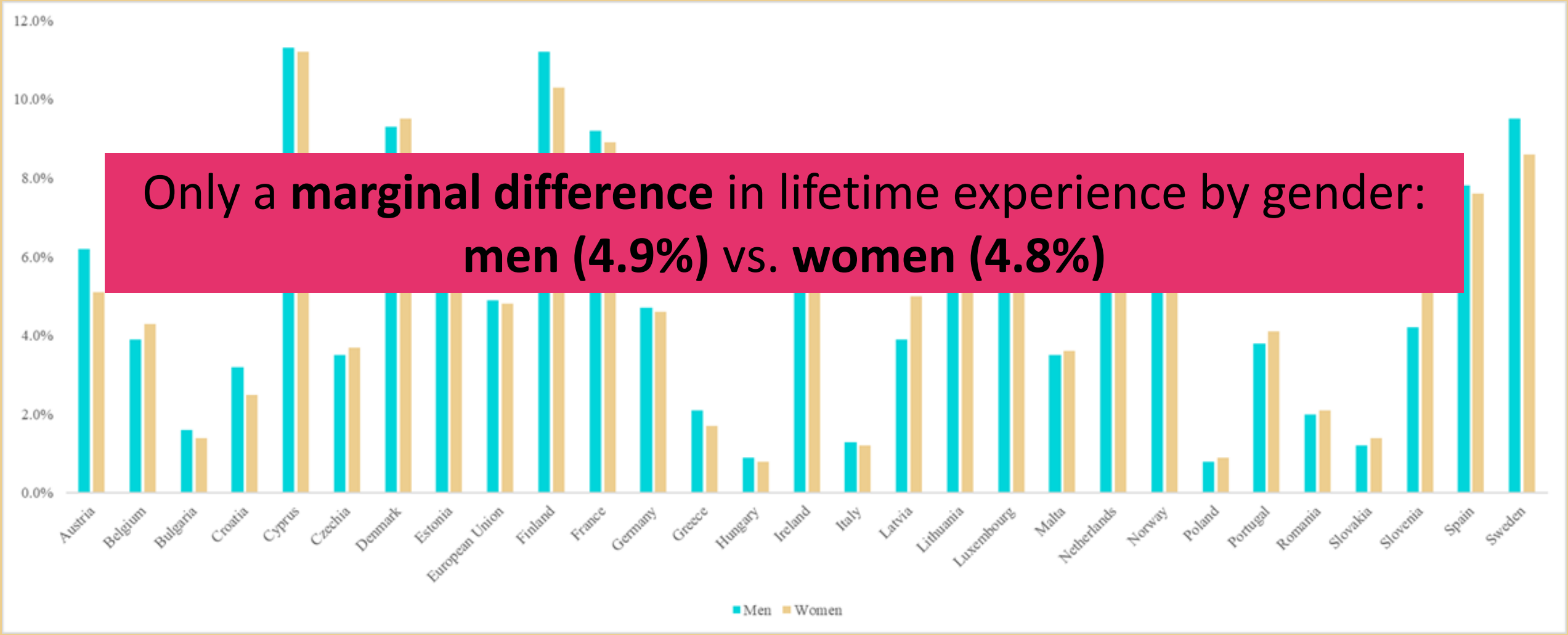
Spain
Sweden
Men
Women

GENDER



Only a **marginal difference** in lifetime experience by gender:
men (4.9%) vs. **women (4.8%)**

SHARE OF WOMEN AMONG THOSE HOMELESS

	EU-SILC lifetime experience of homelessness	EU-SILC currently experiencing homelessness	OECD country fiches
Austria	47%	0%	31%
Croatia	51%	47%	19%
Denmark	52%	56%	23%
Estonia	52%	62%	33%
Finland	49%	2%	22%
France	54%	47%	40%
Germany	50%	35%	37%
Greece	47%	52%	22%
Ireland	59%	69%	38%
Latvia	63%	70%	19%
Lithuania	56%	28%	21%
Netherlands	51%	34%	20%
Norway	45%	12%	29%
Poland	64%	80%	15%
Portugal	55%	46%	28%
Slovakia	55%	29%	39%
Slovenia	57%	50%	27%
Spain	51%	46%	23%
Sweden	46%	31%	38%

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Norway	45%	12%	29%
Poland	64%	80%	15%
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Slovakia	55%	29%	39%
Slovenia	57%	50%	27%
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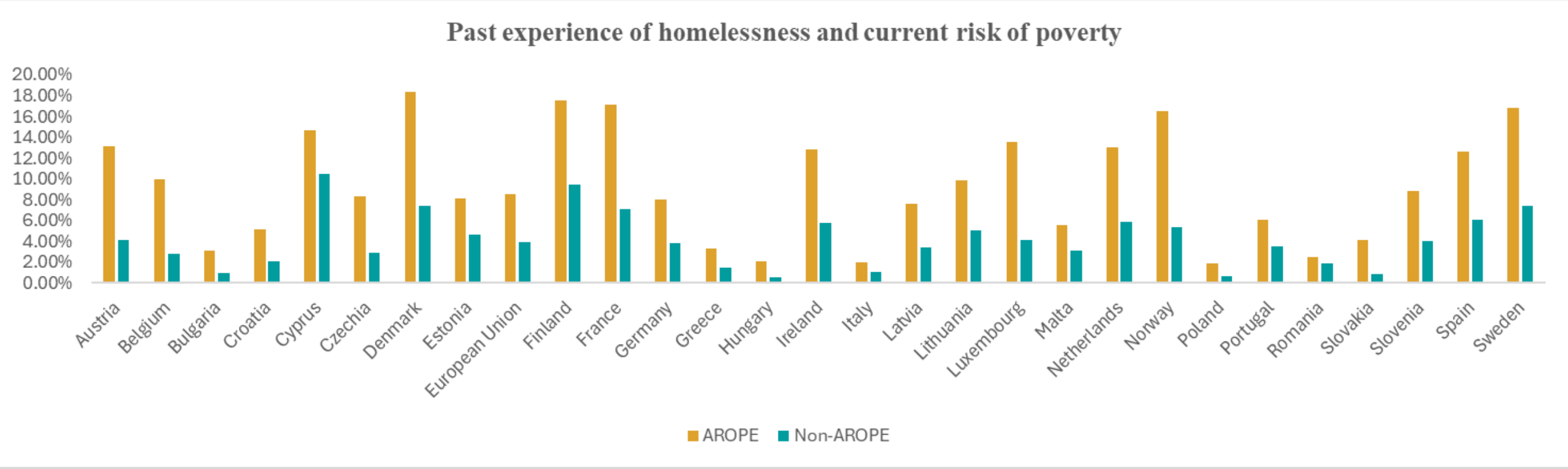
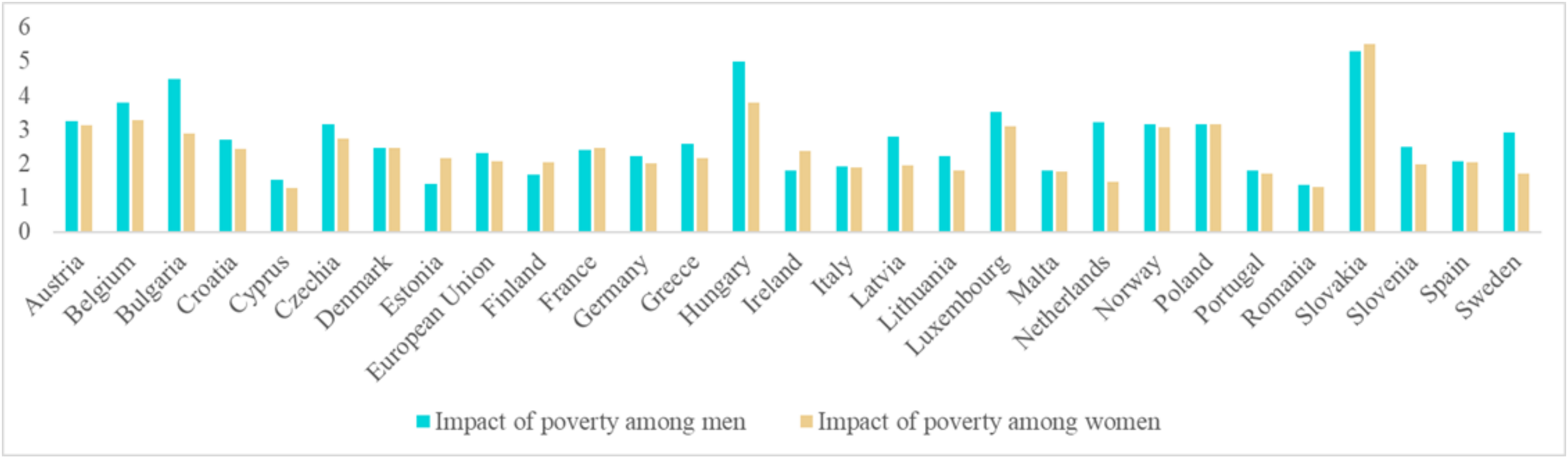
National data still **substantially underestimates** women's homelessness

RISK OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

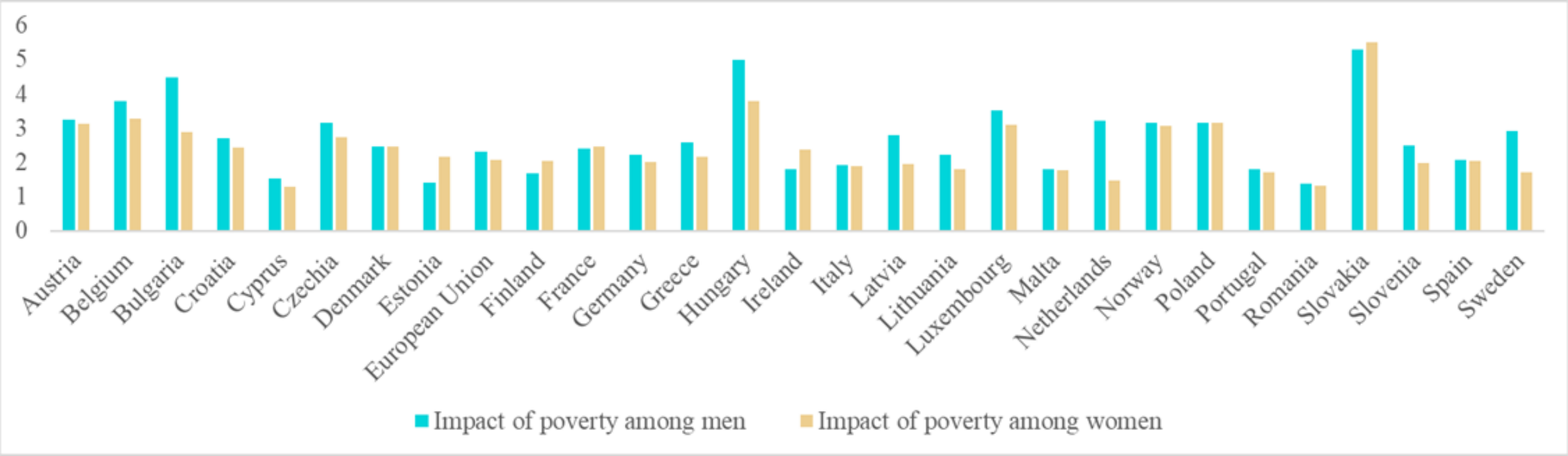


EU: those currently **at risk of poverty and social exclusion** are more than twice (2.18) as likely to have experienced homelessness (8.5%) as those who are not (3.9%).

How much more likely are those at current risk of poverty or social exclusion to have experienced housing difficulties in the past?

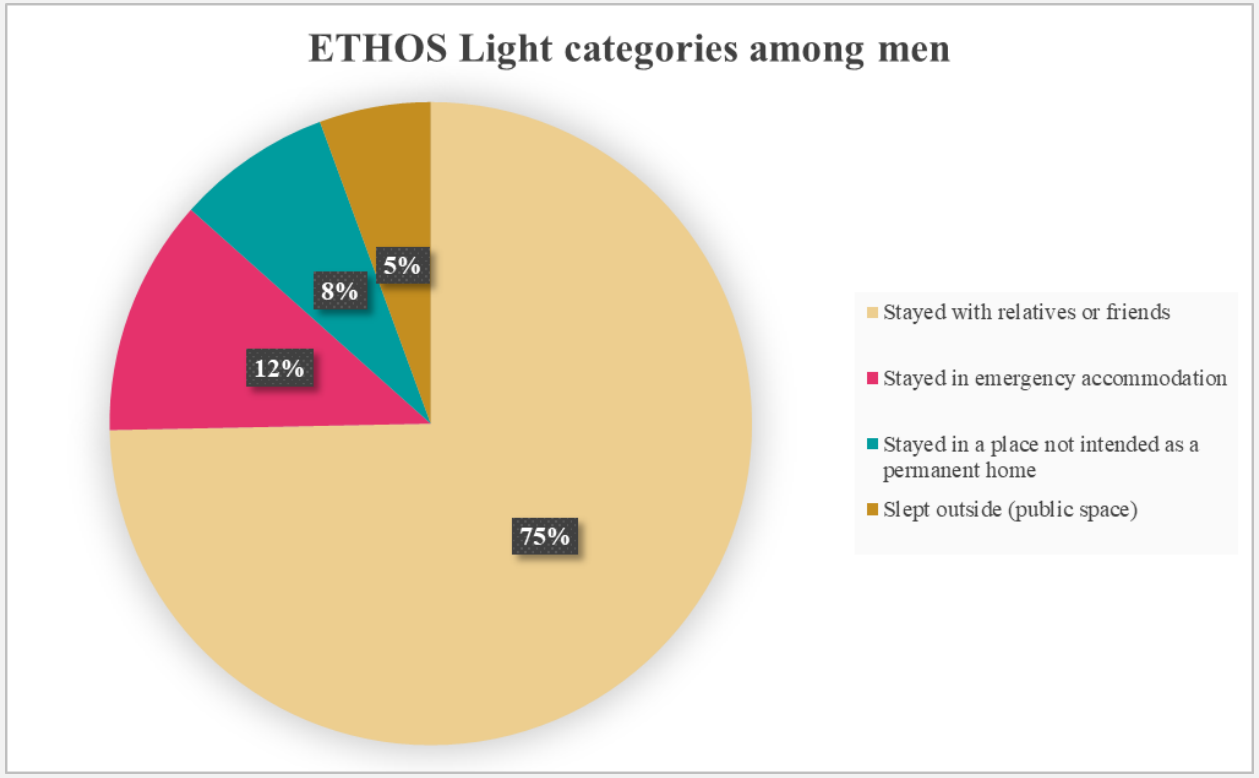


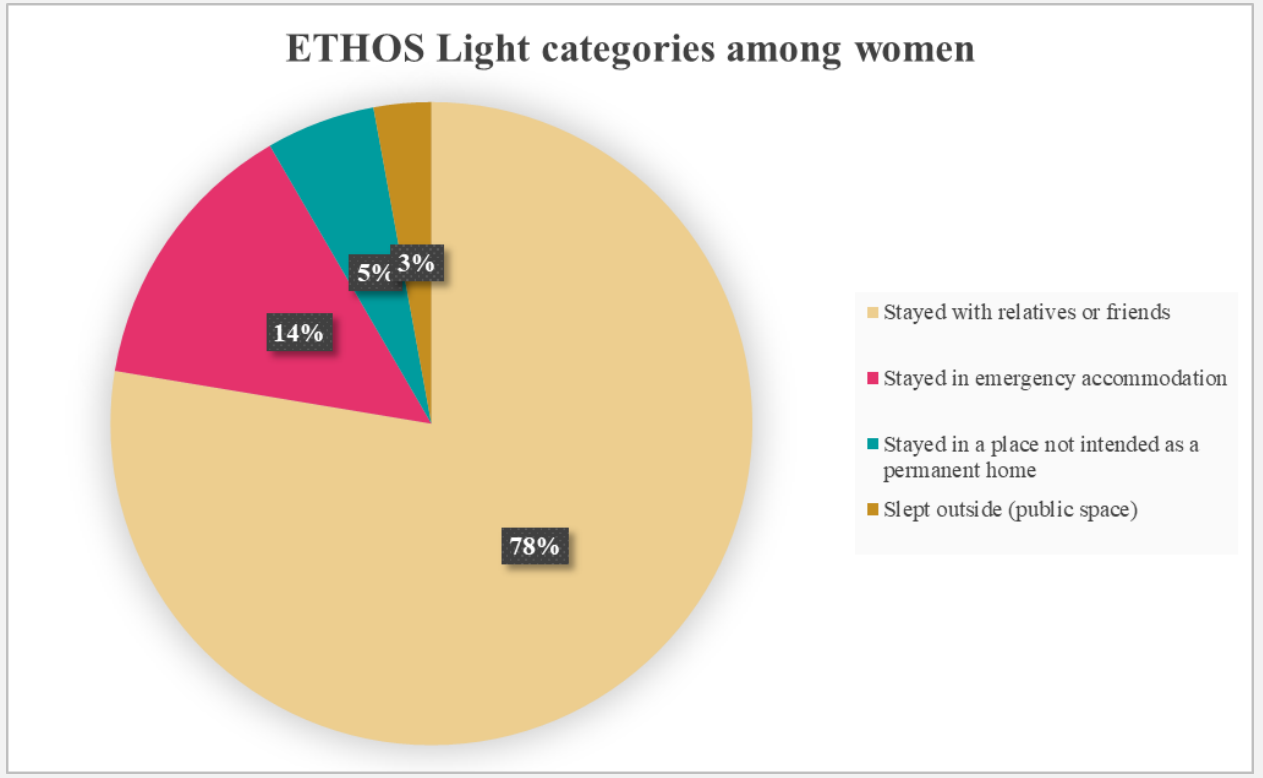
GENDERED LIKELIHOOD OF PAST HOMELESSNESS EXPERIENCE, CONDITIONED BY AROPE STATUS



- In most countries there is a **more substantial difference between AROPE men and non-AROPE men** experiencing homelessness, than between AROPE and non-AROPE women
- Within the at-risk group, **men (9.0%) were more affected by homelessness than women (8.1%)** at EU level
- Except for Slovakia, **women are more likely to be AROPE**

ETHOS LIGHT CATEGORIES





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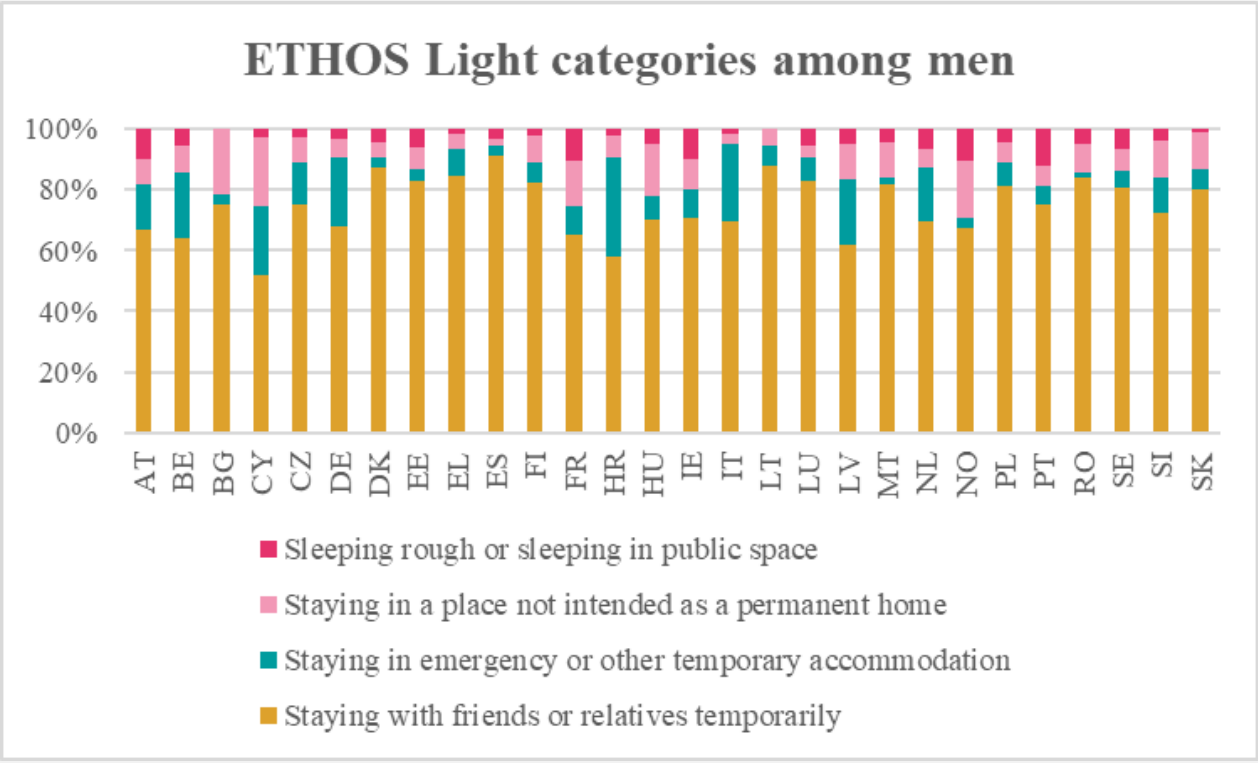
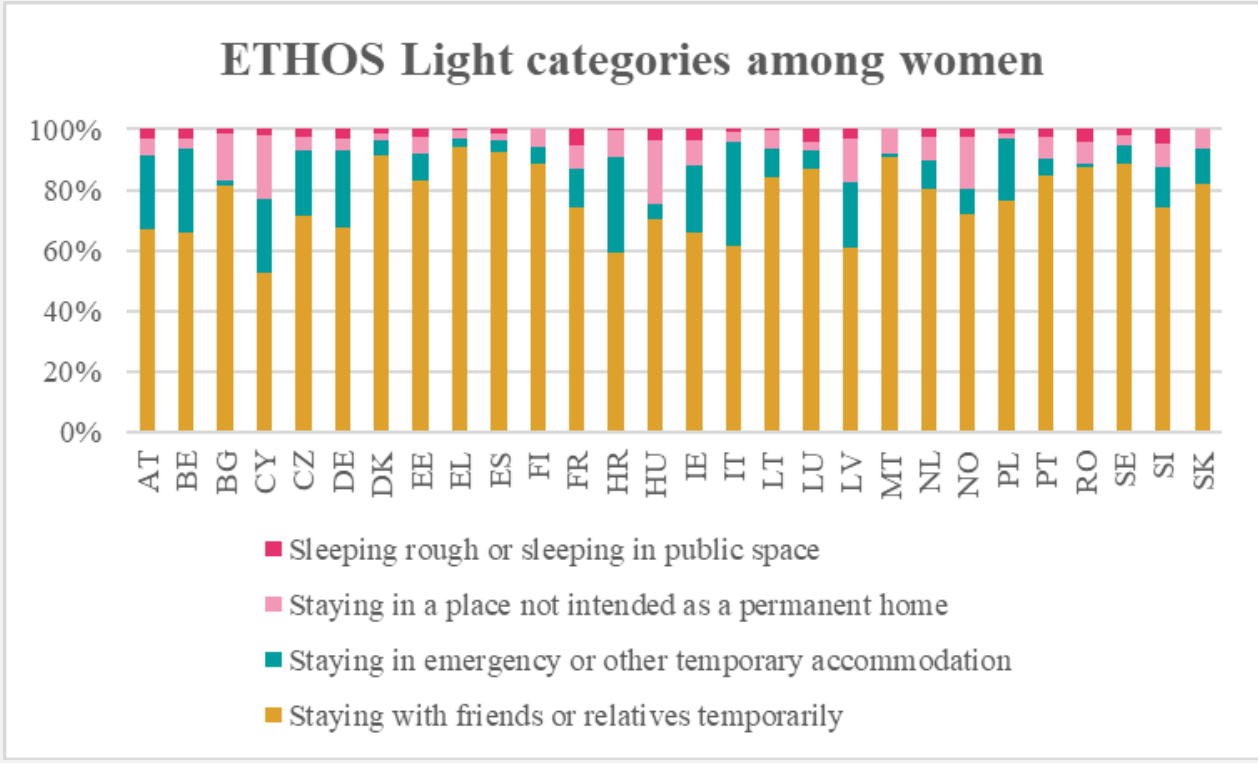
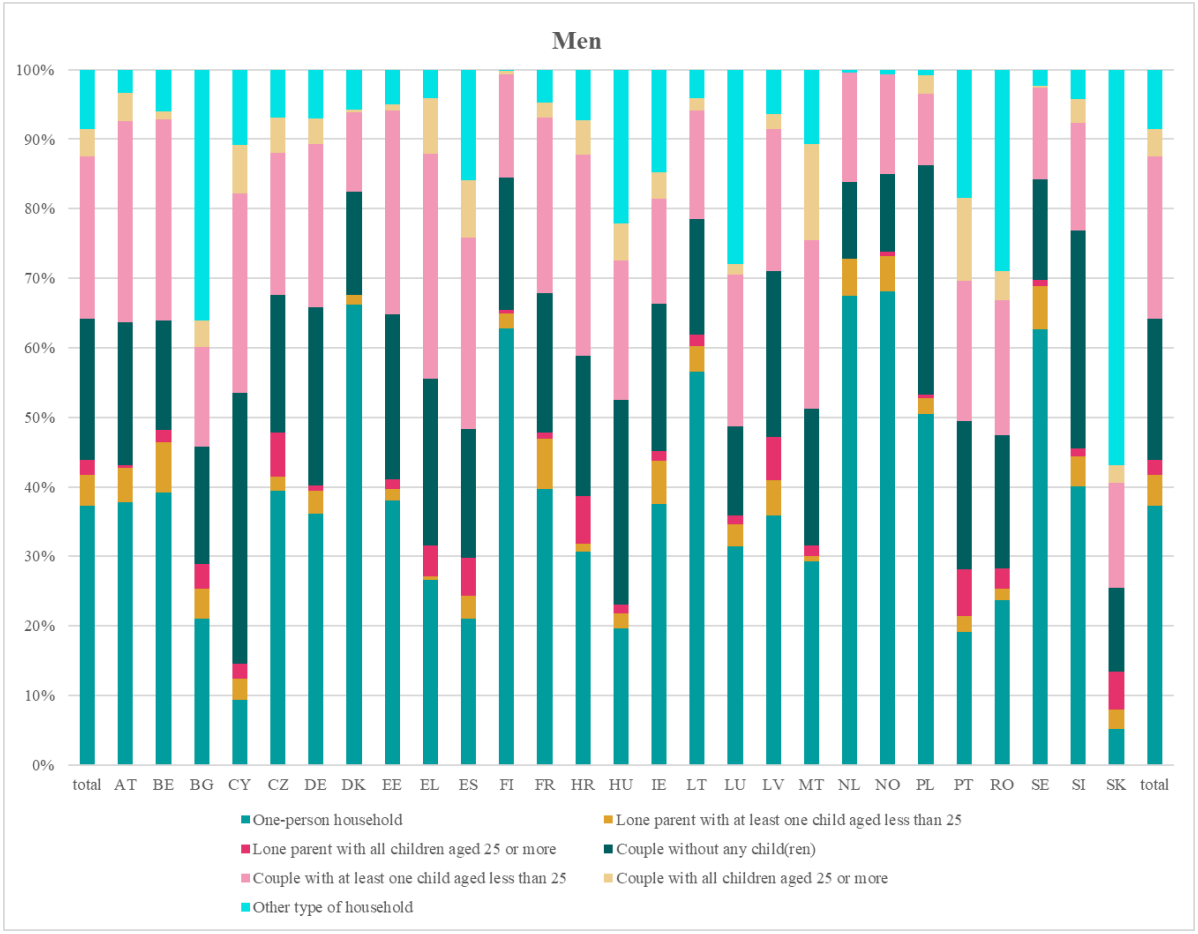
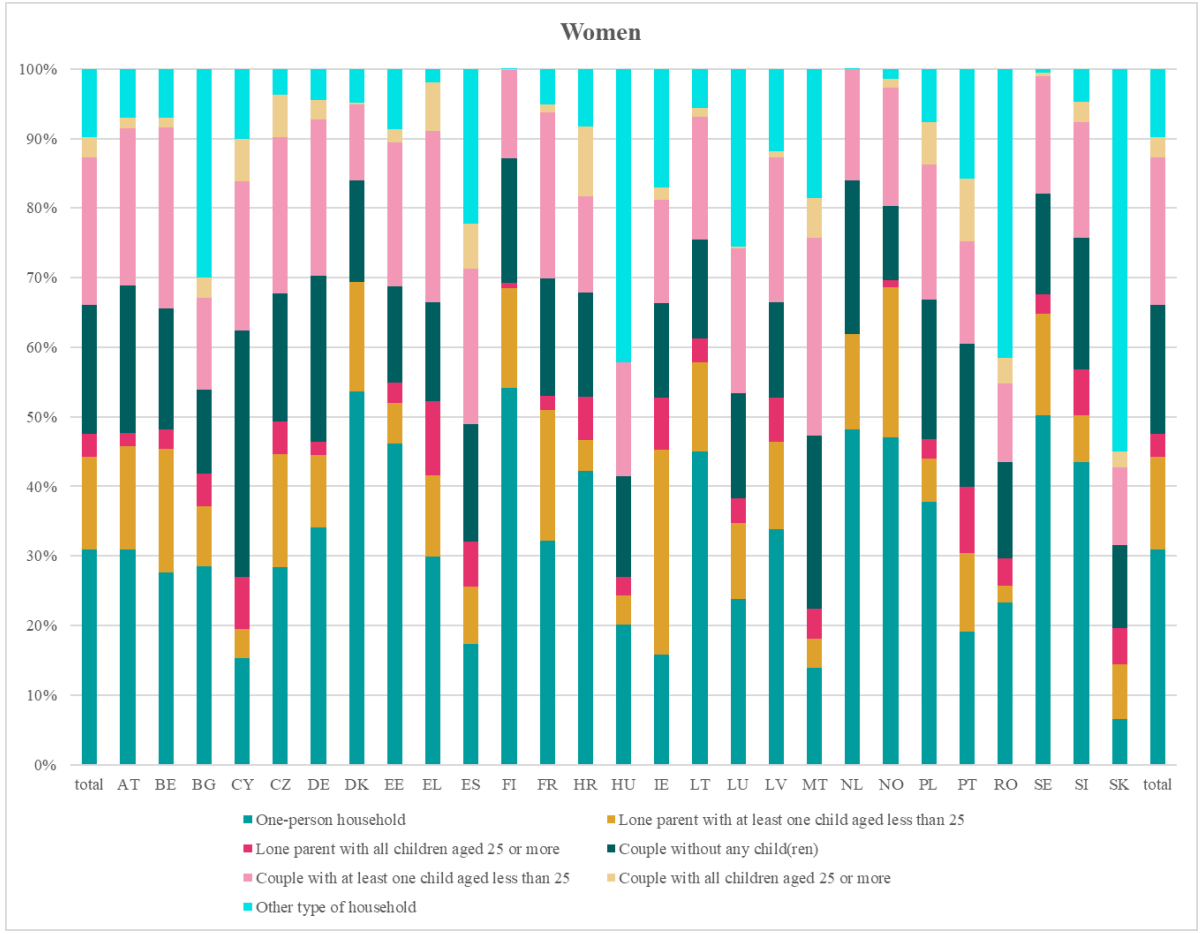
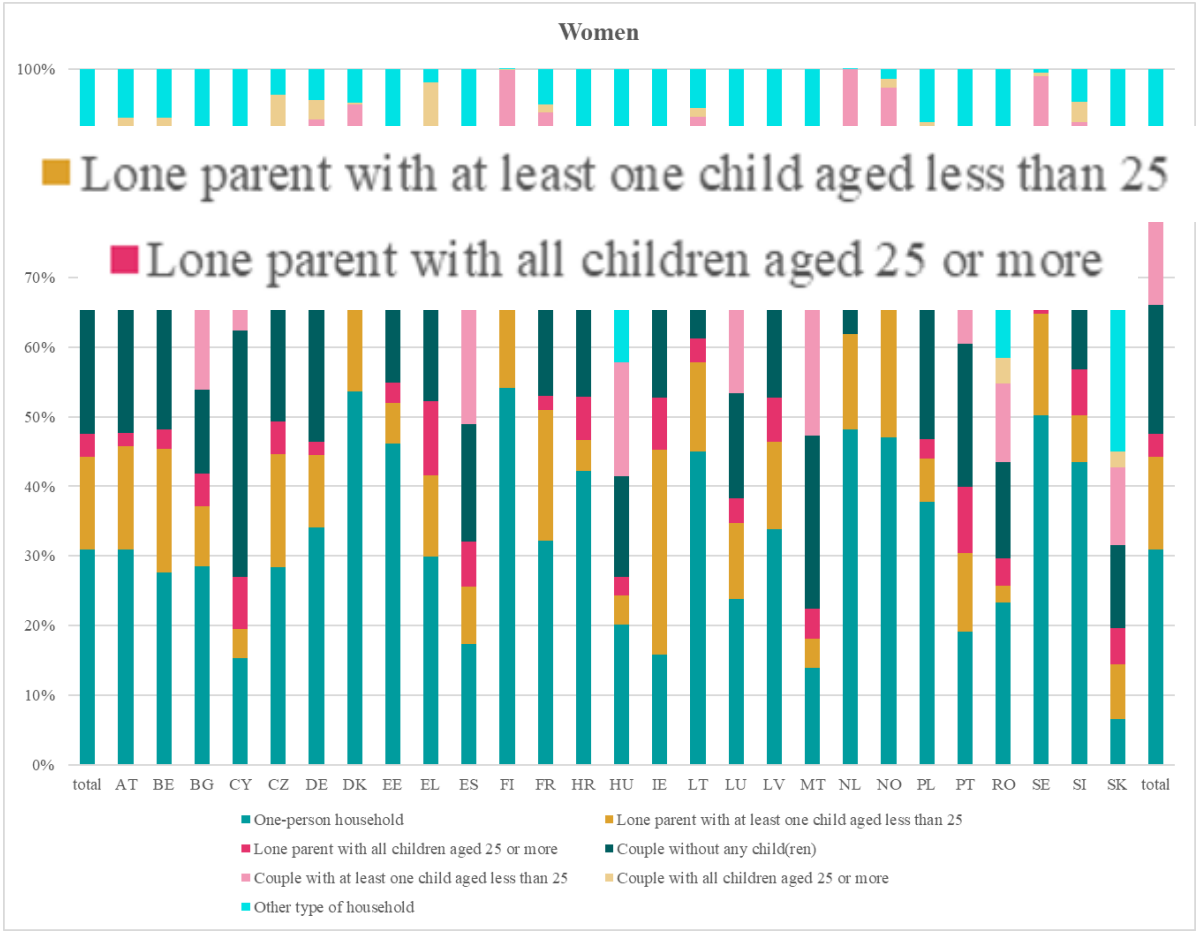








HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



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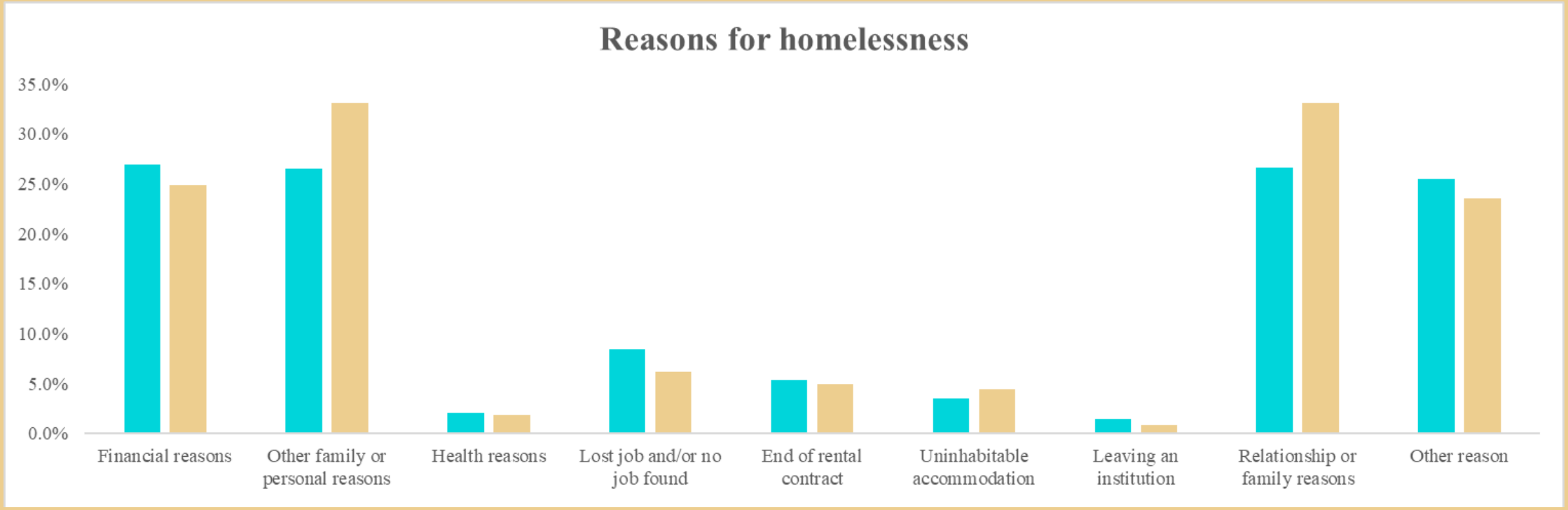
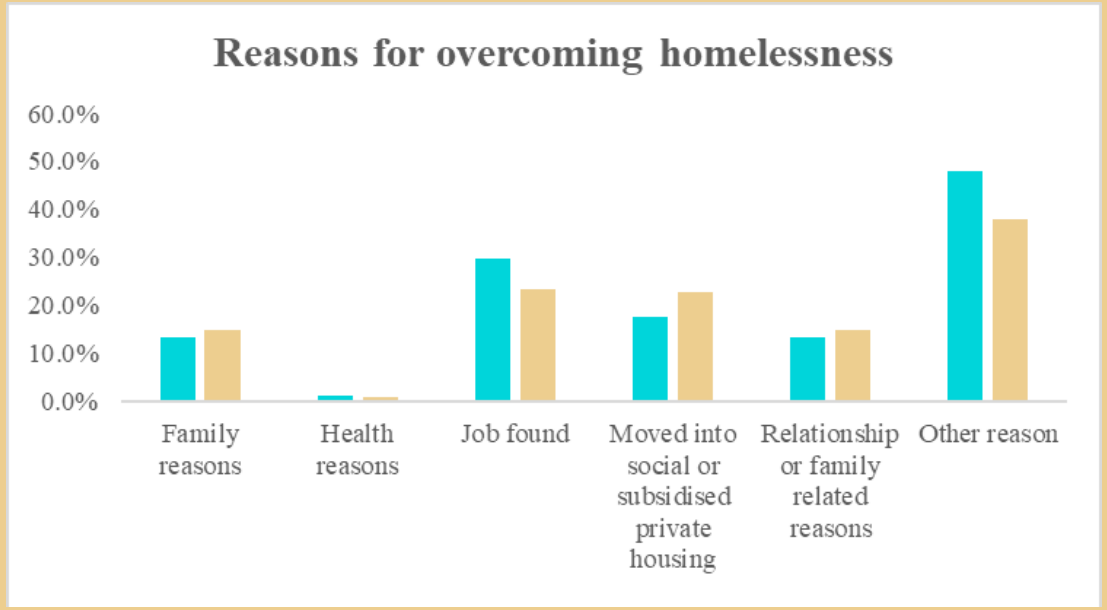
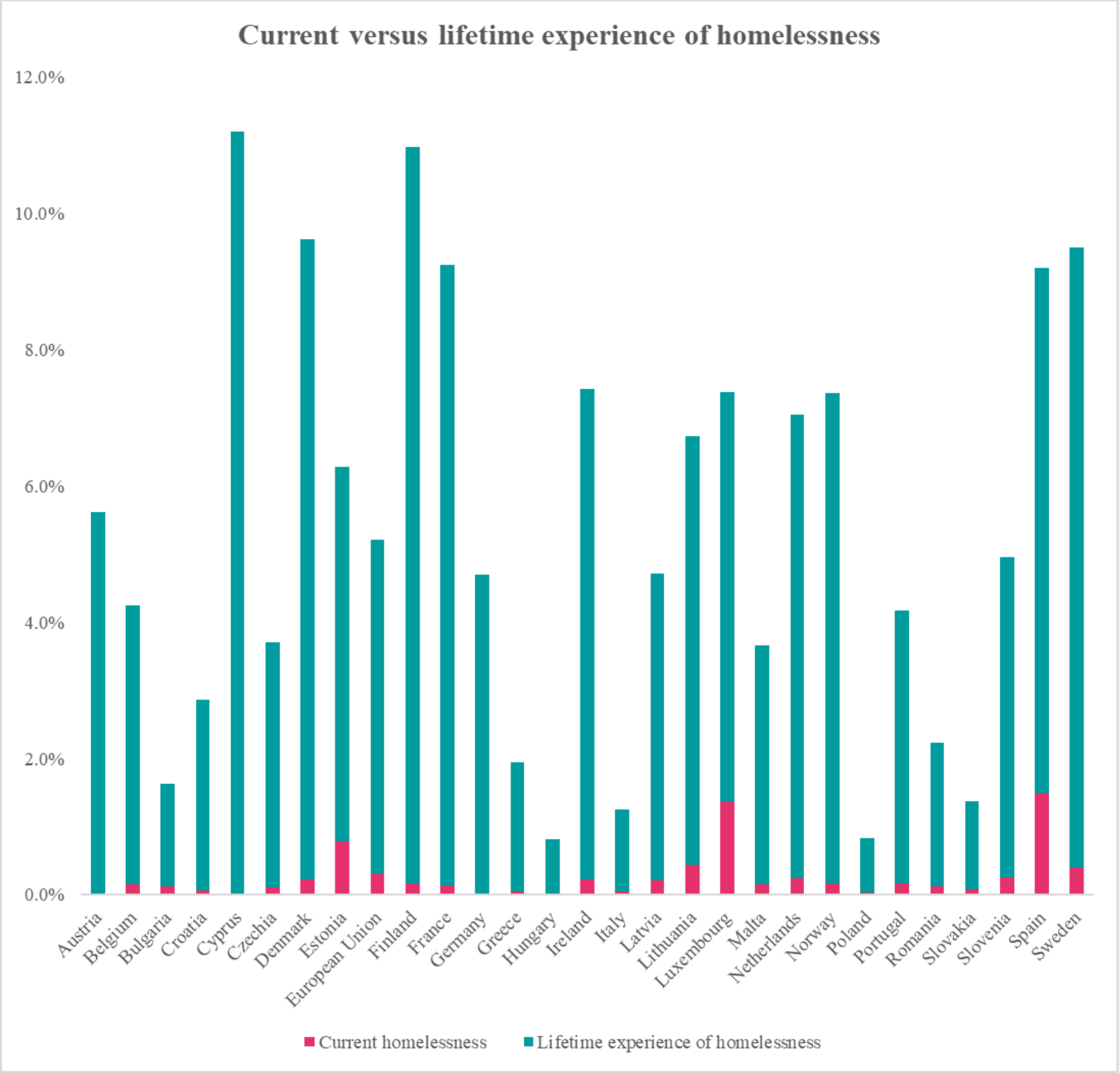


PATHWAYS

Men Women





UNRESOLVED HOMELESSNESS

- **Still homeless**: 6.3% of those with lifetime experience; **0.31% of the whole population**
- Likely all **ETHOS Light category 6**
- **Men** are more likely to be experiencing current homelessness than women (**7.2% versus 5.5%** of those with lifetime experience)
- **AROPE** much more likely to currently be homeless: those at risk of poverty and social exclusion are **3.71 times more likely** to currently be homeless than those not at risk
- **Strong limitations** of this dataset, particularly as it measures current homelessness

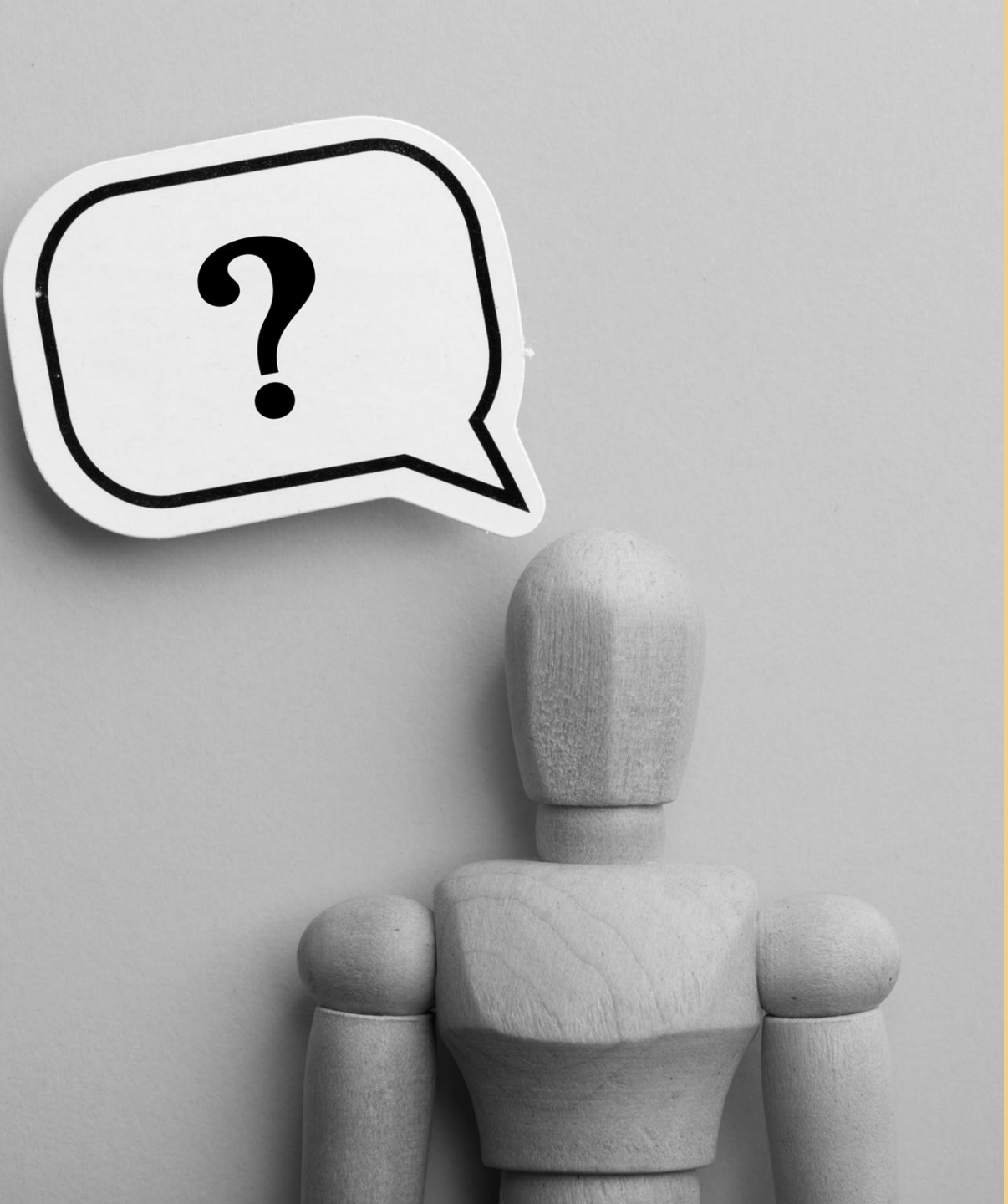
RECOMMENDATIONS

Refining EU-SILC survey methods by **standardizing phrasing** and decreasing cultural differences in interpretation across countries and adding questions that **better reflect gender-specific pathways** into homelessness

Enhancing **cross-country comparability** by integrating administrative data, qualitative research, and long-term tracking alongside self-reported surveys

Continue to develop **gender-sensitive data collection methods**, broaden the scope of homelessness definitions, and assess the long-term impacts of housing instability on women's economic and social well-being

Strengthening **gender-sensitive policies**, including affordable housing initiatives, financial independence programs, and **tailored support services** for women experiencing homelessness



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION