Mobilising the Rights of EU Citizens Experiencing Homelessness: Obstacles and Dynamics of Social Change in the Netherlands

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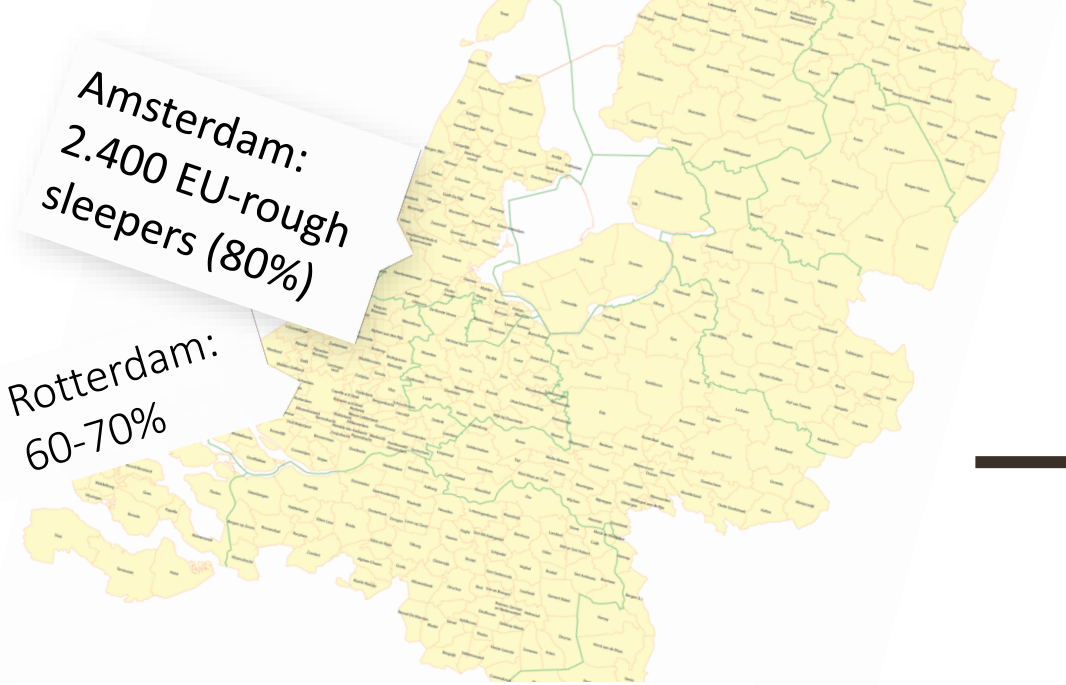
STRAAT CONSULAAT

DE REGENBOOG GROEP MENSEN ONDER ELKAAR



Rotterdam Deputy Mayor:

"We have sufficient place in our shelters for those who are entitled. Eastern Europeans do not belong to that group."

Algemeen Dagblad, 23 February 2023

Plan van Aanpak kwetsbare dakloze EU-burgers

'Checklist Equal Treatment' (2024)

6. Is de EU-burger korter dan een half jaar geleden werkloos geraakt?

Gekozen antwoord:
Ja, de EU-burger is korter dan zes maanden geleden werkloos geraakt.

Advies:
Er is recht op gelijke behandeling.

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Local implementation	e.g. expulsions by immigration authorities	Municipalities generally treat homeless EU citizens as 'non-entitled'

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Mobilizing the rights of EU citizens

Criteria for successful advocacy:

- Credible claim;
- Credible organisation;
- Legitimate claim;
- Collective approach;
- Collaborative approach.

Research Design

- *De Regenboog Groep* researched entitlement to equal treatment of homeless EU citizens
- 176 homeless EU citizens, following the ‘Checklist Equal Treatment’
- 54.5% of the 176 homeless EU citizens (96 individuals) met the criteria for equal treatment

Migration vs. Welfare Conditionality

Migration-related Conditionality	Welfare-related Conditionality
Equal access to welfare/social support is tied to **residence status** ➢ In practice the EU 'residence conditions': economic activity or self-sufficiency	Access to homelessness support is tied to **vulnerability** ➢ (in contrast to e.g. social assistance or unemployment benefits)

Conditionality matrix

Welfare conditionality based on vulnerability

Migration conditionality based on worker status

	Considered **vulnerable**	Not **considered vulnerable**
Right to equal treatment	Admitted **to shelter**	Often **denied**
No right to equal treatment	Possibly **admitted under exceptional rules**	Excluded

Conditionality matrix

Welfare conditionality based on vulnerability

Migration conditionality based on worker status

	Considered **vulnerable**	Not **considered vulnerable**
Right **to equal treatment**	16%	33%
No right **to equal treatment**	15%	36%

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Preliminary Conclusions & Reflection

- European rights are neutralized by local implementation filters
- But also: interacting layers of conditionality lead to structural exclusion
  - Those meeting migration-conditions not likely to meet the vulnerability-conditions
  - Those meeting the vulnerability-conditions not likely to meet the migration-conditions (≠ equal treatment)

- This explains emergence of special ‘EU shelters’
  - Potential indication of gradual transformation of homelessness support structures in open border Europe