DENMARK

Recent data on homelessness

The homeless census has been carried out every two years nationally since 2007: it is one of the few exhaustive and regular national census methodologies of homeless people in Europe. It is a census conducted over one week and includes all of the ETHOS categories.[55] In 2017, 6,635 people were counted as homeless, a rise of 33% since 2009. The increase was 50% among the young and 40% among the elderly.[56] The number of homeless people sleeping rough also grew, from 506 to 648 (+28% between 2009 and 2017). Of the 438 migrants estimated to be homeless in Denmark in 2017, 68% were from other European countries (Eastern and Central) and 17% were from Africa. One in three homeless people were living in temporary accommodation and one in three were living temporarily with relatives. One in ten was homeless and sleeping rough. 5% were living in an emergency shelter. According to the same data, 53% of the homeless reported having mental health problems, and 22%, physical health problems.[57] 46% of the registered homeless people had been so for more than a year and one in four had been so for more than two years.

Context of the Danish housing market

In Denmark, 60.5% of the population owned their own home (46.5% of households were mortgage-holders, 14% of households owned their home outright) and 39.5% rented (39.4% at market price and 0.1% at below market price or for free). Over ten years (between 2008 and 2018), the proportion of homeowners fell by 6 percentage points while the proportion of renters increased by 6 percentage points.[58]

Social housing in Denmark is universal: it is accessible to all, without any eligibility criteria.

Total population on 1 January 2018: 5,781,590 people

GDP/resident in 2018 (Purchasing Power Parity – Index: EU 28 = 100): 128

Number of homeless people: 6,635 people registered as homeless in 2017

Percentage of poor households: 12.7%

Sources : Eurostat / EUSILC 2018 & FEANTSA

In Denmark, the social responsibility of local authorities is assumed with the latter paying 10% of the construction costs in exchange for the possibility of allocating social housing to people in immediate need of housing (e.g. refugees). Local authorities can allocate up to 25% of social housing to tenants of their choosing, and up to 100% by agreement between the local authority and the housing association. The 'balanced rent' principle links the calculation of the rent to the construction and maintenance costs of the dwelling concerned. For example, rents for new social housing are much higher (and at a level almost equivalent to those in the new private rental market) than for social housing built in the 1960s, due to the very high current construction and land costs (especially in and around urban areas).[59] In March 2018, the Danish government adopted a plan entitled *'A Denmark without parallel societies: no ghettos by 2030'*, which has resulted in a particularly strict and stigmatising set of laws and housing policies: in areas officially called 'ghettos', social housing will be demolished, redeveloped or sold off to private landlords if 50% of the residents are immigrants and meet certain income, employment, education or criminal conviction criteria. According to some reports, under this policy, the number of people at risk of being evicted from their homes could exceed 11,000.

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European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, developed by FEANTSA, available [in French] at https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion

56
ESPN country file of Denmark.

57
National Report Denmark ESPN 2019/ Benjaminsen, 2017.

58
Eurostat, 2018.

59
Read more about social housing in Denmark: Skovgaard Nielsen R. & Deichmann Haagerup C. (2017), 'The Danish social housing sector: recent changes and future challenges', Critical Housing Analysis Vol.4 - Issue 1 - 142-149, available at: www.housing-critical.com http://dx.doi.org/10.13060/23362839.2017.4.1.333

The rent price index rose from 84.4 in 2008 to 104.2 in 2018, while the price-to-income ratio rose from 122.2:100 in 2015 and 104.8 in 2018. Generally speaking, Danish incomes have tended to follow the increase in housing prices. On the other hand, 70% of poor households in Denmark were overburdened by housing costs, one of the highest proportions compared to other EU member countries, with an increase of 14.8% between 2008 and 2018.

The modest increase in house prices nationally conceals rapid hikes in Copenhagen and Aarhus. Nationally, almost one poor household in ten was in rent/loan arrears, a proportion that grew by 127% between 2008 and 2018. Since January 2018, financial regulation has been tightened to reduce access to risky loans for households that are highly indebted relative to their income. Overcrowding in housing and severe housing deprivation have risen sharply in Denmark over the last ten years, especially for poor house-holds, 30% of which were living in overcrowded housing and 12% of which were experiencing severe housing deprivation.

A bill to prevent the acquisition of housing by foreign private equity funds was proposed in 2019, following the controversial acquisition by Blackstone of the 360 North real estate plat-form (representing 2,800 housing units). It is worth noting that Denmark is one of the few EU Member States with a law prohibiting foreigners from acquiring a second residence without prov-ing a link with the country and applying for a permit issued by the Danish Ministry of Justice.

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● **Key statistics on housing exclusion and changes between 2008 and 2018**

General population			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Housing cost overburden rate	Total: 14.7% Poor: 69.7%	Total: -14% Poor: -14.8%	Total: -17.9% Poor: -7.3%
Total housing costs (EUR PPP/month)	Total: 706.9 € Poor: 630.7 €	Total: -0.3% Poor: +30.5%	Total: -3.6% Poor: +9.9%
Mortgage/rent arrears	Total: 2.9% Poor: 9.1%	Total: +163.6% Poor: +127.5%	Total: -9.4% Poor: -5.2%
Overcrowding	Total: 9.2% Poor: 30%	Total: +26% Poor: +33.3%	Total: +16.5% Poor: +11.5%
Severe housing deprivation	Total: 3.2% Poor: 12.4%	Total: +190.9% Poor: +163.8%	Total: +39.1% Poor: +47.6%
Experiencing difficulty in maintaining adequate household temperature	Total: 3% Poor: 7.8%	Total: +76.5% Poor: +30%	Total: -21.1% Poor: -23.5%
Non-EU citizens			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Housing cost overburden rate	Total: 22.6%	Total: -33.3%	Total: -43.8%
Overcrowding	Total: 20.3%	Total: -30.5%	Total: -19.1%
Children under 18 years			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Cold housing	Total: 19.4% Poor: 31.1%	Total: +81.3% Poor: +101.9%	Total: -8.1% Poor: +3.3%
Overcrowding	Total: 9.9% Poor: 30.3%	Total: -8.3% Poor: -3.2%	Total: -10% Poor: +1.7%
People with an activity limitation/physical disability			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Housing cost overburden rate	Total: 21.9% Young people (aged 16 to 29): 51.2%	Total: -9.5% Young people (aged 16 to 29): +51.5%	Total: +6.3% Young people (aged 16 to 29): +103.2%
Severe housing deprivation	Total: 3% Young people (aged 16 to 29): 9%	Total: +25% Young people (aged 16 to 29): +109.3%	Total: +30.4% Young people (aged 16 to 29): +52.5%

Housing exclusion indicators - **Denmark, 2018** (%)

— Denmark: Total population
— Denmark: Poor population
---- EU: Total population
---- EU: Poor population

Severe housing deprivation

Housing cost overburder

Rent/mortgage arrears

Overcrowding

Inability to keep home adequately warm

70
60
50
40
30
20
10