

ROMANIA

Recent data on homelessness

There are no official national data on housing deprivation in Romania. The limited data available date back to 2008-2009, when Samu Social and Médecins Sans Frontières conducted a study that counted 15,000 homeless people sleeping rough throughout the country, including about 5,000 in Bucharest. A 2011 census estimated that 165,000 people were living in non-conventional dwellings (i.e. informal settlements or institutions). A Save the Children Romania study conducted in 2014 identified 1,113 homeless children and young people under the age of 35 sleeping rough in Bucharest. 42% of them had been sleeping rough for more than ten years.

Since the 1990s, the profile of homeless people in Bucharest has changed with homeless children becoming young adults who grew up sleeping rough. Moreover, according to estimates by the Samu Social, 19% of homeless adults have been victims of real estate scams (i.e. property in exchange for certain services)⁶⁰. According to Casa Ioana, one of the largest organisations providing services for homeless women, families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.⁶¹

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Cauzele pentru care persoanele adulte fara adapost sunt in strada <http://www.samusocial.ro/media/statistice-cifre> <http://casaioana.org/en/about-family-homelessness>

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Eurostat, 2018.

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ESPN Romania (2019). Following the fall of communism in Romania in 1989, previously state-owned housing was gradually returned to its original owners, leading to successive waves of forced evictions. The people affected by these evictions are a priority group in terms of access to social housing (although this sector is weakly developed).

Context of the Romanian housing market

In Romania, 96.4% of the population owned their own homes in 2018 (1.1% of households were mortgage holders, 95.3% of households owned their home outright) and 3.6% were renters (1.2% at market price and 2.4% at below-market price or for free) in 2018.⁶² These proportions were similar to those from 2008.

The Romanian market is very unbalanced in terms of occupancy status – it is the EU country

Total population on 1 January 2018: 19,530,631 people

GDP/resident in 2018 (Purchasing Power Parity – Index: EU 28 = 100): 65

Number of homeless people: unknown

Percentage of poor households: 23.5%

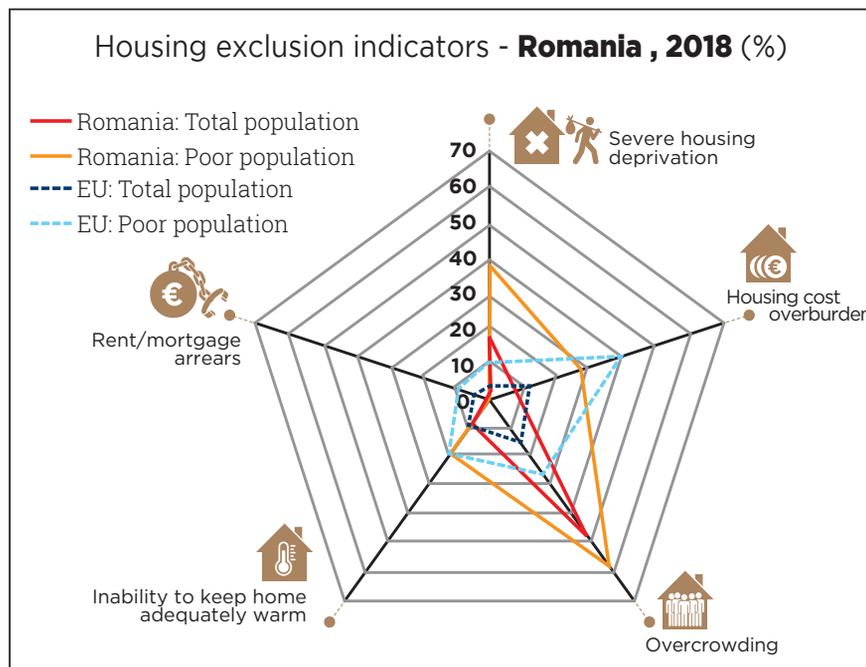
Sources : Eurostat / EUSILC 2018 & FEANTSA

with the most homeowners. Romania experienced an unprecedented real estate bubble before the 2008 crisis with access to credit greatly freed up and the country's entry into the EU in 2007 fast-tracking the phenomenon of rising property prices. The price-to-income ratio index in 2009 was 176.7 (2015 = 100), according to OECD data; it fell in subsequent years, as did rental, sales and land prices, to reach 78.7 in 2018. The lack of affordable housing and the very low social housing stock, the increase in the total housing costs (+26% between 2008 and 2018 for all households, +37.1% for poor households), evictions due to non-payment or restitution of previously state-owned housing are all factors that have contributed to the emergence of new marginalised communities living in informal settlements on the outskirts of cities.⁶³

Although the problem substandard housing has improved sharply over the last ten years, in 2018 it remained a persistent problem in Romania – almost one in two households and four in five poor children were living in overcrowded housing. More than one in three poor households were experiencing severe housing deprivation. Among the groups particularly vulnerable to homelessness, inadequate housing and evictions is the Roma population. Out of an estimated 1.8 to 2.2 million Roma people living

in Romania, 61% were estimated to be living in rural areas and 39% in urban areas.⁶⁴ 54% of Roma families who were living in social housing were not in a financial position to pay the rent, making them vulnerable to rental evictions. 56% of the Roma population were living in isolated communities. According to a 2011 regional study,

picked up by the World Bank,⁶⁵ 30% of the Roma population were living in particularly harsh conditions (compared to 5% of their non-Roma neighbours) and only 17% had running water in their homes (compared to 34% of their non-Roma neighbours).



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World Bank (2014), 'Diagnostics and Policy Advice for Supporting Roma Inclusion in Romania', available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/worldbank/document/eca/romania/OutputEN.pdf>

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Ibid.

● 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: 10.3% Poor: 33.3%	Total: -46.1% Poor: -20.7%	Total: -39.1% Poor: -19.8%
Total housing costs (EUR PPP/month)	Total: 173.4 € Poor: 123 €	Total: +26% Poor: +37.1%	Total: +12.6% Poor: +10.6%
Mortgage/rent arrears	Total: 0.4% Poor: 0.7%	Total: -33.3% Poor: -36.4%	Total: -50% Poor: -50%
Overcrowding	Total: 46.3% Poor: 56.4%	Total: -15.5% Poor: -8.6%	Total: -8.5% Poor: -12.4%
Severe housing deprivation	Total: 16.1% Poor: 37.4%	Total: -44.7% Poor: -29.8%	Total: -29.4% Poor: -23.4%
Experiencing difficulty in maintaining adequate household temperature	Total: 9.6% Poor: 18.2%	Total: -60.7% Poor: -45.3%	Total: -34.7% Poor: -28.9%
Non-EU citizens			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Housing cost overburden rate	<i>No official data</i>	<i>No official data</i>	<i>No official data</i>
Overcrowding	<i>No official data</i>	<i>No official data</i>	<i>No official data</i>
Enfants de moins de 18 ans			
Indicator	2018	2008-2018 change	2013-2018 change
Cold housing	Total: 11.2% Poor: 22%	Total: -58.4% Poor: -45.4%	Total: -45.1% Poor: +32.7%
Overcrowding	Total: 66.4% Poor: 78.7%	Total: -9.7% Poor: -4%	Total: -7% Poor: -3.3%
People with an activity limitation/physical disability			
Indicator	2018*	2010-2018 change*	2013-2018 change*
Housing cost overburden rate (data 2017)*	Total: 13.8% Young people (aged 16 to 29): 8.8%	Total: -15.9% Young people (aged 16 to 29): -25.4%	Total: -18.8% Young people (aged 16 to 29): -45.7%
Severe housing deprivation	Total: 12.5% Young people: 21.5%	Total: -37.2% Young people: -47.2%	Total: -35.6% Young people: -55.7%

*As 2018 data on housing cost overburden rate of people with an activity limitation are not available, the data used here are from 2017.



Photo : © BAGW | *Emergency shelter for asylum seekers – Berlin, Germany*