

**Homelessness** is one of the main societal problems dealt with under the EU Social Protection and Inclusion Strategy. The prevention of homelessness or the re-housing of homeless people requires an understanding of the pathways and processes that lead there and hence a broad perception of the meaning of homelessness.

FEANTSA (European Federation of organisations working with the people who are homeless) has developed a typology of homelessness and housing exclusion called ETHOS.

The ETHOS typology begins with the conceptual understanding that there are three domains which constitute a “home”, the absence of which can

be taken to delineate homelessness. Having a home can be understood as: having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (*physical domain*); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (*social domain*) and having a legal title to occupation (*legal domain*). This leads to the 4 main concepts of Rooflessness, Houselessness, Insecure Housing and Inadequate Housing all of which can be taken to indicate the *absence of a home*. ETHOS therefore classifies people who are homeless according to their living or “home” situation. These conceptual categories are divided into 13 operational categories that can be used for different policy purposes such as mapping of the problem of homelessness, developing, monitoring and evaluating policies.

	Operational Category	Living Situation	Generic Definition	
Conceptual Category	ROOFLESS	1 People Living Rough	1.1 Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
		2 People in emergency accommodation	2.1 Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
	HOUSELESS	3 People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 Homeless hostel	Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
			3.2 Temporary Accommodation	
			3.3 Transitional supported accommodation	
	4 People in Women's Shelter	4.1 Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated due to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term	
	5 People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1 Temporary accommodation / reception centres 5.2 Migrant workers accommodation	Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status	
	6 People due to be released from institutions	6.1 Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	
		6.2 Medical institutions (*)		
	7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	6.3 Children's institutions / homes	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing	
		7.1 Residential care for older homeless people	No housing identified (e.g by 18th birthday)	
	INSECURE	8 People living in insecure accommodation	7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people	Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
			8.1 Temporarily with family/friends	Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing
8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy			Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling	
9 People living under threat of eviction	8.3 Illegal occupation of land	Occupation of land with no legal rights		
	9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented)	Where orders for eviction are operative		
	9.2 Re-possession orders (owned)	Where mortgagor has legal order to re-possess		
INADEQUATE	10 People living under threat of violence	10.1 Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence	
		11 People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	11.1 Mobile homes	Not intended as place of usual residence
			11.2 Non-conventional building	Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty
	12 People living in unfit housing	11.3 Temporary structure	Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin	
		12.1 Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations	
13 People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms		

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay is defined as more than one year. This definition is compatible with Census definitions as recommended by the UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006)

(\*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.



For more information please see FEANTSA's *Fifth Review of Statistics on Homelessness in Europe* (Edgar and Meert) at [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)  
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