

Homelessness in the Czech Republic

KEY STATISTICS There is no national/regional homeless data-collection strategy. Several cities and regions carry out surveys. There is no uniform methodology and data is not comparable. Key sources of data include the following: The national register of social services provides information on the number of places in services.

2017: 216 long-term homeless shelters and 75 short-term shelters in the Czech Republic.

In 2016, the homeless shelters were utilized by a total of 5,355 users, of which 1,777 were minors. A total of 4,870 requests were declined. In the case of the short-term shelters, 1,086 requests were declined. The 2011 population census included the first official national data on the number of people using homeless services. According to the 2011 census, there are 11,496 homeless people in the Czech Republic. This covers people using accommodation facilities for homeless people (i.e. asylum shelters) and night shelters. It is important to note that experts consider that the real number is much greater. As part of the preparatory work for the new “Concept of Preventing and Tackling Homelessness Issues” (see below) an Expert Group gathered all available homeless statistics and made a qualified estimation on the number and distribution of homeless people in the Czech Republic. Their definition included the following categories: (Visible homeless, partially visible homeless, hidden homeless)

The Expert Group considered the number of homeless people to be at least three times higher than the census figures (approx. 30,000 people – obvious homeless: ETHOS 1.1, 2.1, 8.2 and partially (8.1) or hidden homeless: ETHOS 3.1, 4.1, 7.1). The estimated number of people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness was 100,000.

HOUSING PROBLEMS

Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MoLSA, 2016) – Evaluation of survey addressing homelessness estimate that there are almost 119,000 people at risk of housing loss in the territory of the Czech Republic. - The number of people without homes has been estimated to be 68,500; of which 74.4% are male and 23.6% female; 11.9% are under 18 and 10.3% are over 65. There is a total of 187,500 people who have experienced housing exclusion in the Czech Republic.

CHANGE IN PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Development trends point to a significant increase in the number of people exposed to the loss of their home (or more precisely high numbers of people in all categories of European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)) and the deepening of problems of such households. At present, single mothers who are at risk of losing their housing, and who make up the majority population in homeless shelters for single women and mothers with children are a major issue. An analysis of the impacts of insufficient housing on school and other related problems of children in the Czech Republic (MEDIAN, 2017) states that approximately 37% of Czech children live in households that suffer from some housing problems (insufficient heating, humidity and leakage, lack of space, noise, dirt and vandalism in the child’s surroundings). The quality of housing is significantly related to children (7- 12 years old) experiencing severe problems in school, along with health and communication problems.

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

National Strategy The “Concept of Preventing and Tackling Homelessness Issues in the Czech Republic until 2020” was adopted by the government in August 2013. In order to develop the Concept, an Expert Group was created, attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) Commission for Social Inclusion. NGOs working on homelessness, experts from relevant ministries and academics are represented in the group. Since the Concept’s adoption, the Expert Group supervises and monitors the implementation of particular measures. The whole system of proposed solutions in the Concept is based on the definition of four trajectories describing routes into homelessness. These trajectories are defined as:

1. Long-term (people who are born into and/or grow up in homelessness);
2. Short-term (people who find themselves temporarily in difficult situations such as debt, unemployment, etc.);
3. Health (people who face specific challenges due to health factors);
4. Own choice (people who become homeless through their own choice).

The strategy is also based on economic analysis of the costs of homelessness and of various solutions. A Consensus Conference on Homelessness was held in November 2014. Conclusions from the Conference were published by the end of 2014 and are available on the conference’s website. The conference was one of Concept’s priorities for 2014. In 2015, the Czech Parliament approved the “Social Housing Concept of Czech Republic 2015-2025”. The goal of the Concept is a wider offer of housing for people threatened by loss of housing or social exclusion and for people who spend a high percentage of their income on housing. Furthermore, the concept aims to create a new social housing system intended to target people who fulfil certain strict criteria, to avoid the waste of public money. The basic principles should be to ensure and maintain long-term quality standards and spatially non-segregated social rental housing through a set of tools of housing and social policies. The system should be linked to the execution of social work, provision of housing allowance and it should augment the social services system (specifically shelters), as per the Act on Social Services.

<https://www.feantsa.org/download/czech-republic-20171431767123284348800.pdf>