Summary of key findings

Official statistical definition of homelessness (Table 1.CHE)
There is no official statistical definition of homelessness in Switzerland.

Latest national estimates of homelessness (Table 2.CHE)
- 3,810 individuals, representing 0.04% of the total population (2021)
- Point-in-time count, based on the Homelessness in Switzerland Report
  - ETHOS Light groups included:
    - ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
    - ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
    - ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women’s refuges)
    - ETHOS 4: People in institutions
    - ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
    - ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Legal framework to collect data on homelessness (Table 3.CHE)
There is no legal obligation to collect data on homelessness in Switzerland.

National homelessness strategy (Table 4.CHE)
Switzerland does not have a national homelessness strategy.

Approaches to collect data on homelessness (Table 5.CHE)
- Homelessness in Switzerland Report: Communes completed a questionnaire on the state of homelessness in the area of the commune (Table 5.1.CHE).

This project was funded by the European Union. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the OECD member countries or the European Union.
COUNTRY NOTE: DATA ON HOMELESSNESS IN SWITZERLAND

Table 1.CHE. Official statistical definition of homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homelessness</th>
<th>There is no official statistical definition of homelessness in Switzerland. However, the following definition was used for questionnaires sent to communes for the Homelessness in Switzerland Report:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>(or the threat of losing one’s home) affects people who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• live on the street, in public spaces or in the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• have no fixed abode and move between different shelters (e.g. emergency shelters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• live in accommodation where their stay is temporary (e.g. homeless shelters, women’s and men’s shelters, emergency shelters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• stay longer than necessary in an institution (child and youth protection facilities, prisons, clinics, etc.) because they cannot find a follow-up solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• have to stay with friends and acquaintances involuntarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• live in unsafe, unsuitable living conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.CHE. Data on people experiencing homelessness

National data, presented according to ETHOS Light Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline estimate of homelessness (Individuals)</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
<th>ETHOS 1: People living rough</th>
<th>ETHOS 2: People in emergency accommodation</th>
<th>ETHOS 3: People in accommodation for the homeless</th>
<th>ETHOS 4: People living in institutions</th>
<th>ETHOS 5: People living in unconventional dwellings</th>
<th>ETHOS 6: People staying with family/friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 810</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
<td>Included in headline estimate but not specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of count: Point-in-time ☒ Flow ☐ Year: 2021

Included in headline estimate: Children (<18) ☐
Temporary accommodation for: Asylum seekers ☐ Refugees ☐ Victims/survivors of domestic violence ☐

Note: Data are extrapolated from a sample of municipalities. Municipalities were not explicitly asked about the inclusion of children or temporary accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees and/or victims of domestic violence. Therefore, it is unclear whether they are included in the headline estimate. Source: Federal Housing Office (BWO), 2022, Homelessness in Switzerland Report

Table 3.CHE. Legal framework to collect data on homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law that governs data collection on homelessness</th>
<th>None.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal obligations</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.CHE. National homelessness strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National homelessness strategy in place</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No, but regional and/or local strategies exist</th>
<th>☒ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Table 5.CHE. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

## 5.1.CHE. Homelessness in Switzerland Report

### Description
Representatives from each municipality were required to fill out an online questionnaire on the extent of homelessness. Out of 2172 municipalities, 618 took part in the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of 28%. The report extrapolated the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Switzerland based on the municipalities that responded to the survey. The School of Social Work Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) was contracted to perform the research.

### Type of count generated
- ☒ Point-in-time
- ☐ Flow (period)

### Methods
- • Service-based method
- • Administrative data

Note: collection methods may differ across municipalities.

### Lead authority(ies)
- • Federal Housing Office (BWO)

### Source(s) of information
- • Representatives from each commune

### Scope
- • National level

### Depth of data
- • Simple enumeration

### ETHOS Light groups included
- ☒ ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
- ☒ ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
- ☒ ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women’s refuges)
- ☒ ETHOS 4: People in institutions
- ☒ ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
- ☒ ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as “included” in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted.

### Notes
- Homelessness in Switzerland (admin.ch)