



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).

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Table 1.CHE. Official statistical definition of homelessness

Homelessness	<p>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:</p> <p>Homelessness (or the threat of losing one's home) affects people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live on the street, in public spaces or in the countryside • have no fixed abode and move between different shelters (e.g. emergency shelters) • live in accommodation where their stay is temporary (e.g. homeless shelters, women's and men's shelters, emergency shelters) • stay longer than necessary in an institution (child and youth protection facilities, prisons, clinics, etc.) because they cannot find a follow-up solution • have to stay with friends and acquaintances involuntarily • live in unsafe, unsuitable living conditions.
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Table 2.CHE. Data on people experiencing homelessness

National data, presented according to [ETHOS Light Typology](#)

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

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

Law that governs data collection on homelessness	None.
Legal obligations	None.

Table 4.CHE. National homelessness strategy

National homelessness strategy in place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, but regional and/or local strategies exist <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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Table 5.CHE. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

5.1.CHE. Homelessness in Switzerland Report	
Description	
<p>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.</p>	
Type of count generated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point-in-time <input type="checkbox"/> Flow (period)	Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-based method • Administrative data <p>Note: collection methods may differ across municipalities.</p>
Lead authority(ies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Housing Office (BWO) 	Source(s) of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from each commune
Scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National level 	Depth of data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple enumeration
Frequency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular 	
ETHOS Light groups included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 4: People in institutions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing) <p>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.</p>	
Notes Homelessness in Switzerland (admin.ch)	