



# PICUM input to the Call for evidence on Fighting housing exclusion

April 2026

This document contains PICUM's contribution to the European Commission's [call for evidence on fighting housing exclusion](#), submitted on 8 April 2026, in preparation of a Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Fighting Housing Exclusion.

Undocumented migrants across Europe face systematic exclusion from shelters, rooted in legal, administrative, and policy frameworks rather than isolated implementation failures. The 2026 PICUM-FEANTSA report "[Housing and homelessness of undocumented migrants across Europe: patterns, barriers, and ways forward](#)" shows that access to shelters is often explicitly restricted by law or made



inaccessible in practice, causing widespread homelessness, including rough sleeping, and extreme housing precarity.

Legal restrictions based on residence status are the primary barrier for accessing shelters according to 81% of surveyed members. In many Member States, publicly funded shelters

are either formally limited to people with regular residence status or operate under mandates that prioritise those who are. Even where the law does not explicitly prohibit access, administrative requirements function as exclusion mechanisms: shelters often require identity documents or registration in municipal systems — criteria that undocumented migrants cannot necessarily meet. Saturated systems (reported by 65% of survey respondents) may also mean that citizens or regular migrants are prioritised for places in shelters.

Because access often depends on local authorities or civil society rather than legal guarantees at the national or local levels, the provision of shelter is uneven across and within Member States. In practice, this creates a two-tier system in which undocumented people depend on underfunded NGOs, charity and precarious self-made solutions, rather than quality shelters and Housing First solutions.

Migration enforcement frameworks also hamper undocumented migrants' access to housing and shelters. Some Member States, like Germany, require public authorities to report undocumented migrants to migration authorities. Even when services are accessible in theory, the risk of detection and deportation leads many to avoid shelters altogether. The blurring of social support and migration control fundamentally undermines Europe's goal to eradicate homelessness. In parallel, service providers, NGOs and volunteers face legal and/or financial risks when offering shelter or housing support. The criminalisation of assistance worsens exclusion and has a chilling effect: it reduces service availability and undermines humanitarian aid, despite the absence of viable alternatives within public systems.

As a result, undocumented migrants are overly pushed into informal, unsafe, and unstable housing arrangements, incl. night shelters with highly restrictive regimes, overcrowded subletting, and self-made solutions like informal settlements or squats.

We urge that the upcoming Recommendation on Fighting Housing Exclusion:

1. Recognizes the higher risk of housing exclusion and homelessness faced by undocumented migrants and that homelessness contributes to people staying undocumented as it is more difficult to regularise one's stay when housing insecure;
2. Recommends Member States adopt binding standards that guarantee access to emergency and longer-term (Housing First) accommodation irrespective of migration/residence status. National laws that explicitly exclude undocumented migrants from shelters should be revised to ensure equal and needs-based access.

3. Promotes effective complaints and grievance mechanisms for all tenants, irrespective of their migration status, and without fear of migration enforcement.
4. Promotes robust firewall protections and the repealing of existing reporting obligations. Ensuring safe access without fear of detection is essential to making existing services genuinely accessible and eradicating homelessness by 2030.
5. Connects to the MFF and ensures a dedicated thematic concentration for combatting homelessness in the National Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) or in the European Social Fund, depending on the final budget structure.
6. Reinforces shelter provision for undocumented migrants by urging MS commit to dedicated, scaled-up funding in the National Regional Partnership Plans (Regulation) to expand inclusive, needs-based, dignified shelters which further transition into long term, rights-based solutions, irrespective of migration/ residence status.

*For more on housing and homelessness of undocumented migrants, including adults and children, visit PICUM's [webpage on anti-poverty and housing](#).*

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for social justice.

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