

# **Glossary**

# **Kirkeasyl// Church asylum**

KirkeAsyl, or "Church Asylum," is a practice in some European countries where churches offer sanctuary to individuals facing deportation or other legal actions that could lead to harm or injustice. The idea is based on the historical concept of sanctuary, where religious buildings were seen as places of refuge. In modern times, this practice is mostly symbolic and relies on the moral authority of the church to protect individuals while their cases are reconsidered by authorities. It aims to provide temporary safety and draw attention to humanitarian issues.

In Denmark there were two documented cases in recent history:

## **The Case of the Palestinian Refugees (1991)**

In 1991, around 200 Palestinian refugees sought refuge in Blågård's Church to avoid deportation. These individuals were stateless and had been denied asylum by Danish authorities, who planned to deport them to Lebanon, a country they had fled due to the ongoing civil war and conflict. The refugees feared for their safety and lives if forced to return.

## **The Case of the Iraqi Asylum Seekers (2009)**

In 2009, a group of around 60 Iraqi asylum seekers took refuge in Brorson's Church in Copenhagen. They were facing imminent deportation after Denmark decided to repatriate

them following the end of their temporary protection status. The church provided sanctuary seekers were eventually removed by police, leading to widespread protests and a re-examination of Denmark's approach to handling asylum cases.

The church's decision to offer sanctuary brought national and international attention to the plight of the Palestinian refugees. The action highlighted the harsh realities faced by stateless individuals and the ethical implications of deporting people to conflict zones.

After several months of negotiations and public pressure, Danish authorities eventually allowed the Palestinians to stay in Denmark.

# Rough Sleepers

“Rough sleepers” is a term commonly used in the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries to describe individuals who live on the streets or in places not designed for habitation, such as doorways, parks, underpasses, or abandoned buildings. These individuals lack access to any form of permanent housing or shelter, making them the most visible and vulnerable segment of the homeless population.

Rough sleepers often face a myriad of challenges that compound their vulnerable situation. These include:

**Exposure to Elements:** Rough sleepers are subject to harsh weather conditions, which can lead to severe health issues such as hypothermia, frostbite in the winter, and dehydration or heatstroke in the summer.

**Health Issues:** Chronic physical and mental health problems are prevalent among rough sleepers, often exacerbated by a lack of access to healthcare. Common issues include respiratory infections, skin diseases, malnutrition, substance abuse disorders, and untreated mental illnesses.

**Safety Concerns:** Living on the streets exposes rough sleepers to violence, theft, and harassment. They are often at risk of assault and other forms of victimization.

Lack of Basic Amenities: Rough sleepers lack access to essential services like clean water, sanitation, and proper nutrition, which further deteriorates their health and well-being.

Social Isolation: The stigma associated with homelessness can lead to significant social isolation, reducing their chances of receiving help and support from the community.

In Copenhagen, rough sleepers face increasing challenges due to new regulations and policies that complicate their already difficult lives. These challenges are exacerbated by factors such as **hostile architecture** and the **criminalization of homelessness**, making it even harder for them to navigate the city's landscape.

# Homelessness

Homelessness: Where individuals lack stable, permanent, and adequate housing. This condition can vary widely and change frequently, reflecting the diverse and dynamic nature of people's housing situations.

## Types of Homelessness

**Rough Sleeping:** Living on the streets or in places not meant for habitation, such as parks, doorways, or abandoned buildings. This is the most visible and extreme form of homelessness.

**Couch Surfing:** Temporarily staying with friends, family, or acquaintances. Individuals in this situation do not have a permanent place to stay and rely on the hospitality of others, often moving frequently.

**Emergency Shelters:** Staying in temporary shelters provided by charities, municipalities, or other organizations. These shelters offer short-term accommodation, typically for overnight stays, to those with no other place to go.

**Transitional Housing:** Living in temporary housing solutions designed to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing. These programs often provide additional support services to help individuals stabilize their lives.

**Overcrowded Housing:** Sharing an apartment or house with multiple people, often in cramped conditions. This type of housing can be a step away from homelessness but lacks the stability and security of having one's own home.

**Hidden Homelessness:** People who do not have stable housing but manage to stay out of sight, such as living in cars, sheds, or other temporary and insecure arrangements. This form of homelessness is less visible and often underreported.

### **Understanding Non-Linear Homelessness**

Homelessness is non-linear, meaning that individuals can move between different types of homelessness or precarious housing situations. Someone might start by couch surfing, then move to a shelter, and eventually find transitional housing. Conversely, they might fall back into rough sleeping due to various challenges such as job loss, health issues, or lack of affordable housing.

# Housing First

Pioneered in the early 1990s by Dr. Sam Tsemberis, Housing First is a homelessness assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness. It operates on the principle that stable housing is a foundational need that must be met before addressing other issues like employment, mental health, or substance abuse.

## Key Principles of Housing First

**Immediate Access to Housing:** Individuals are quickly provided with permanent housing without preconditions, such as sobriety or mandatory participation in treatment programs.

**Consumer Choice:** Participants have a choice in selecting their housing and in the services they receive, fostering a sense of autonomy and respect.

**Recovery Orientation:** The approach supports the recovery of individuals by offering comprehensive services to address mental health, addiction, and other needs.

**Individualized Support:** Tailored services are provided based on each person's unique needs, including case management, healthcare, and life skills training.

**Community Integration:** Housing is integrated into the community, avoiding segregation and promoting social inclusion.



## Housing First Approach in Denmark

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The Danish Ministry for Children and Social Affairs is responsible for implementing the Housing First approach, as mandated by Part 1 of the Consolidation Act on Social Services. On a local level, each municipality has the discretion to interpret this act, determining the types of housing provided (if any) and the criteria for eligibility.

# Criminalization of Homelessness

Criminalization of Homelessness: Policies and practices that penalize people experiencing homelessness for engaging in basic life-sustaining activities in public spaces, such as sleeping, sitting, eating, or asking for money.

## Key Terms and Concepts

### **Anti-Homeless Laws:**

**Loitering Laws:** Regulations that make it illegal to stand or linger in a public place without an apparent purpose.

**Sleeping Bans:** Laws prohibiting sleeping in public spaces, including parks, sidewalks, and benches.

**Camping Bans:** Regulations against setting up temporary shelters or encampments in public areas.

**Panhandling Restrictions:** Laws that restrict or ban begging or soliciting money in public spaces.

### **Hostile Architecture:**

**Defensive Design:** Architectural features intended to deter people from lingering in public spaces, such as spikes on ledges, sloped benches, and strategically placed barriers.

**Uncomfortable Public Furniture:** Benches with armrests or dividers that prevent lying down,

making it difficult for homeless individuals to rest.

**Dispersal Orders:**

**Move-On Orders:** Police directives that require individuals to vacate a specific area, often used to break up encampments or groups of homeless people.

**No-Sit/No-Lie Ordinances:** Laws that prohibit sitting or lying down in certain public areas.

**Fines and Penalties:**

**Citations:** Tickets issued to individuals for violating anti-homeless laws, which often come with fines that homeless individuals cannot afford to pay.

**Arrests:** Detaining individuals for non-compliance with anti-homeless laws, leading to potential jail time.

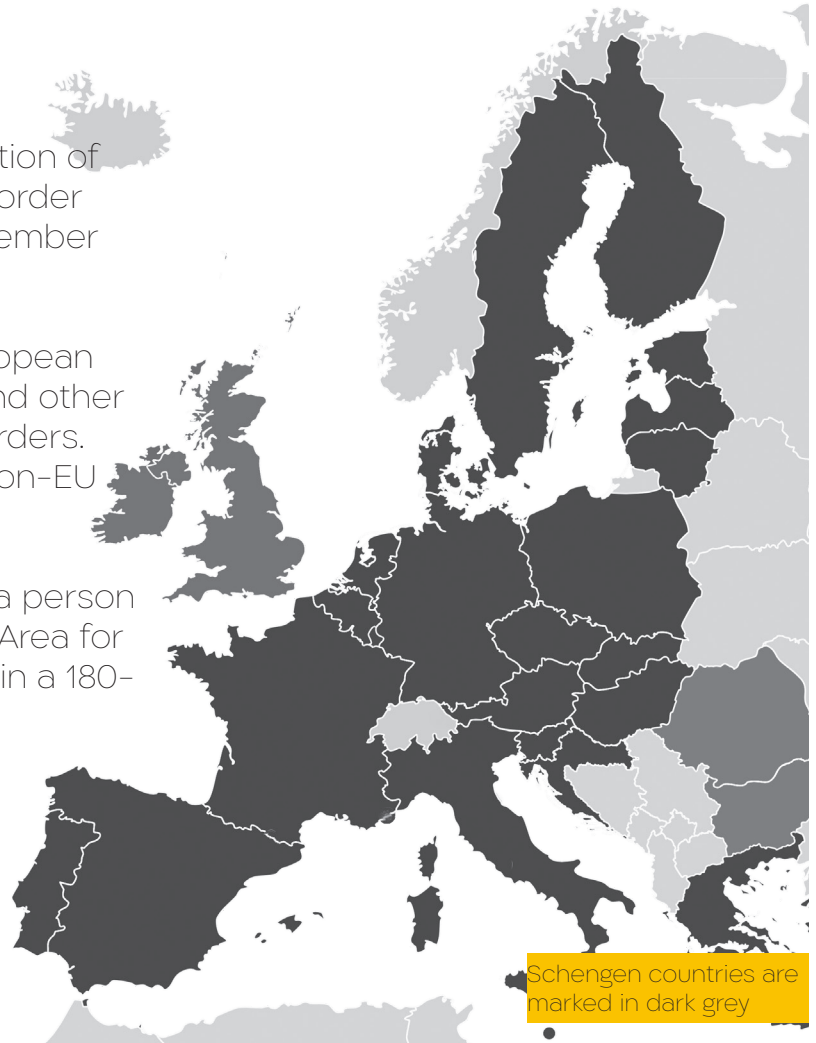
# Schengen Agreement

A treaty signed in 1985 that led to the creation of Europe's Schengen Area, where internal border checks have largely been abolished for member countries.

**Schengen Area:** A zone comprising 27 European countries that have abolished passport and other types of border control at their mutual borders. It includes most EU countries and a few non-EU countries.

**Schengen Visa:** A short-stay visa allowing a person to travel to any member of the Schengen Area for up to 90 days for tourism or business within a 180-day period.

Schengen countries typically have well-established social welfare systems that provide support to asylum seekers, such as housing, healthcare, and financial assistance, during their application process and after gaining asylum.



# Dublin Regulation

A European Union (EU) law that determines which EU member state is responsible for examining an application for asylum seekers seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention.

**Member State:** Any country that is a part of the European Union and is bound by the Dublin Regulation to assess asylum applications.

**Asylum Seeker:** A person who has left their home country and seeks international protection in an EU member state under the Dublin Regulation.

**Country of First Entry:** The EU member state where an asylum seeker first enters the EU. This country is typically responsible for processing the asylum application under the Dublin Regulation.

This aspect is crucial for asylum seekers who continue to flee and hide, only revealing themselves upon reaching a Schengen welfare country in Europe.