

# **Vulnerable EU citizens – local solutions and strategies in European cities**

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## **Introduction**

The right of EU citizens to freely move to and live in any EU country is often considered one of the fundamental rights of citizens within the European Union (EU) (Nilsson and Lundberg, 2010). The impact of Union citizenship lies in its contribution towards creating a common space of free movement in which citizens do not lose their social rights when crossing internal borders. At the end of 2012, approximately 2.8% of the total EU population was living in another EU country; this however applies for economic active EU citizens. For these, the free movement has been in effect since the 1960s (European Commission, 2013a). With the Maastricht treaty that established the EU union in 1993, the right to free movement was broadened to encompass all EU citizens, whether they are economically active or not. With that the union citizenship was introduced as a complement to national citizenship (Nilsson and Lundberg, 2010). However, EU citizenship does not give rise to unrestricted rights. The free movement of persons has always provoked discussion about the level of rights accommodated for (especially when it comes to persons who are not economically active) and it has also always been confronted with Member States that have tried to impose restrictions on it (Striano 2013). In particular with the recent enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007, these concerns have been raised in the old EU member states. EU citizens who move to other EU countries in search of employment but who fail to find work make up a growing social problem in many countries. Particularly in big cities, a significant part of homeless service users and of rough-sleepers are citizens of other EU countries; a situation that has dramatically increased during the last years. The situation implies new challenges for local social services and other governmental and non-governmental actors that are faced with a heterogeneous group living under extremely marginalized conditions (Gehring 2013).

Little is known so far about how various countries tackle that new social problem, what actors take responsibility, how activities look like and if it is possible to see similarities and

differences. With that paper we aim to fill a knowledge gap and present some local initiatives of work with vulnerable<sup>1</sup> EU citizens<sup>2</sup>. We tried to capture the motives of the organizations to organize activities, the target group, content of work, and modes of financing. A special interest lies in identifying similarities and differences. Finally, we make an effort to identify types of strategies and relate these to earlier findings in the literature.

### **Directive of free movement**

The right to free movement within the EU is mainly regulated through directives (Nilsson and Lundberg, 2010). In 2004 the directive on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States<sup>3</sup> (Directive 2004/38/EC) came into force. In short, the directive clarifies the rights of EU citizens to free movement within the EU and expanded the freedom to include union citizens<sup>4</sup> and their family members<sup>5</sup> regardless of economic activity. In addition, third country nationals with a permanent right of residence in an EU member state have the same right to free movement as regular EU citizens<sup>6</sup>. The directive is one of the central legal documents regulating free movement within the EU and clearly states that EU citizens residing in another member state should be treated equally with nationals by the host nation.

Although the freedom of movement is declared a civil right (in the sense that it is a part of the union citizenship), the directive includes important distinctions between EU citizens who are economically active and those who are not. Any EU citizen has the right to reside in another

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<sup>1</sup> The term vulnerable is used to point out that the group of interest is those in need of some kind of supportive service in the host country. It is unfortunate that the term might be considered vague and imprecise. However, since needs and responses may vary both nationally and locally a broad term such as vulnerable can be useful. Terms such as homelessness, poverty and unemployment could capture states or processes more or less causing distress for an intra-EU migrant. Yet, these terms could exclude intra-EU migrants that do not correspond to the applicable definitions of the terms. Additionally, social exclusion is a commonly used term in EU contexts.

<sup>2</sup> In this study, the term migrant is used to capture all kinds of intra-EU migration, irrespective of the reasons for staying in another EU country. People who exercise their right to free movement within the EU are often called mobile EU citizens in EU terminology. The interest here lies in their status as migrants in the sense that they are residing in an EU country other than the one they have citizenship or a resident permit in.

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2004/38/EC will henceforth be called *the freedom of movement directive* or *the directive* since no other EU directives are mentioned in this text.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the directive also regulates migration within the EEA, which besides the EU member states includes Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. Switzerland has partially adopted the directive.

<sup>5</sup> Family members can be third country nationals (i.e. citizens of non-EU countries).

<sup>6</sup> In this text, this group is included in the terms union/EU citizen unless stated otherwise.

member state in a period of three months unconditionally<sup>7</sup>. After three months the right of residence starts to depend upon economic activity and/or sufficiency of resources. If not considered economically active, union citizens must have sufficient resources for themselves and their family members in order not to become a burden on the host nation's social assistance system<sup>8</sup>. What is assessed as a burden is however not specified and gives room for considerable leeway. The fact that a person applies for social assistance cannot be the sole factor (burden) leading to for example expulsion<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, the principle of proportion is included in the directive, emphasizing that decisions should be proportionate to what is meant to be achieved and should thus also guide decisions about expulsion. This means that the member states' available sanctions to enforce restrictions on the freedom of movement could be seen as fairly limited. On the other hand it should be noted that a *directive* is a legislative act that sets out a goal that all EU countries must achieve. However, it is up to the individual countries to decide how. Consequently, the implementation of the directive has varied across member states (Carrera and Faure Atger, 2009) and highly questionable expulsions of (especially) Roma people under EU law have occurred (O'Nions 2011; Bennett, 2011; Gehring, 2013).

### **Vulnerable EU citizens, a new phenomenon**

Several Member States report challenging situations in some of their cities and in particular address homelessness and other forms of vulnerability as problems connected to the freedom of movement (European Commission 2013a, 2013b). "The UK Department of Communities and Local Government's latest rough sleeping figures reveal that 28% of people sleeping on the streets of London are from Central and Eastern European countries and 11% from other EU Member States. According to the Italian Census on Homelessness, published in 2012, 11.5% of people in homeless shelters in Italy are Romanians. In France, outreach organizations working in Paris indicate that 40% of their clients (mainly rough sleepers) are young people from Eastern Europe" (Feantsa 2013a:2). The European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) has highlighted this issue in a number of ways. FEANTSA's magazine has released special issues with reports from local service

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<sup>7</sup> Article 6.1

<sup>8</sup> Article 7.1

<sup>9</sup> Article 14.3

providers and others with some insight into the situation of both homeless citizens in general (FEANTSA, 2010) and intra-EU citizens in particular (FEANTSA, 2013a,b). Articles in the latter issue report for varying local policy responses and inadequate access to services. As a response to these reports FEANTSA (2011) has released statements arguing that the EU should ensure that member states provide basic services for intra-EU citizens. Mostowska, (2014) showed that local and national policy responses reveal different types of framing (defining the problem, assigning responsibility, making amoral judgement and suggesting solutions) regarding the issue of homeless intra-EU citizens; interpretational frames that are decisive for arguments behind strategies<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the general lack of comparative data on EU migrant homelessness, there seems to be some evidence that there is an increasing share of citizens from “new” EU member states within the homeless population of the “old” ones (Pleace, 2010; FEANTSA, 2012). In a monitoring report by FEANTSA, 14 of 21 member states responded that the immigrant population among homeless service users had increased, which was the most prominent investigated trend (2012). While the increase reported by FEANTSA concerns immigrants in general, immigrants from the new member states are specifically pointed out as an increasing group in the old member states.

For economically inactive EU citizens exercising their right to free movement, financial support from national and/or local agencies of the host country is likely to be out of reach. This becomes evident when examining eligibility criteria for social assistance benefits in relation to the directive. During the first three months of residence the host nation is not obliged to provide social assistance<sup>11</sup>. Concerning the remaining period of time, the European Commission argues that:

*“[...] EU citizens are unlikely in practice to be eligible for social assistance benefits, since to acquire the right to reside they would have needed to show the national authorities that they had sufficient*

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<sup>10</sup> The migrant worker frame, the exceptional humanitarianism frame and the undisciplined deviant frame

<sup>11</sup> Article 24.2

*resources, which are indicatively equal to or higher than the income threshold under which social assistance is granted.” (2013a, p. 6)*

In addition (and serving as an example of national interpretation), the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen, 2014) argues that the criteria for right of residence<sup>12</sup> should be fulfilled before local agencies process an application according to the principle of equal treatment; with the exemption of emergency situations.

The reasons for restrictions on e.g. social assistance entitlements might be derived from rather uninformed discussion on welfare-use and migration. Along with the enlargement of the union in 2004 and 2007 respectively<sup>13</sup>, political discussions about the extent of free movement intensified (Giulietti and Kahanec, 2013). Yet, most of the citizens of these accession countries could not enjoy full free movement rights for a period of time since many of the ‘old’ countries imposed time-limited restrictions on for example access to the job market. The economic crisis in 2008 also accelerated the debate on free movement (European Commission, 2013a). One assumption behind arguments for restrictions was that economically disadvantaged and unemployed people supposedly would travel to countries with a more generous welfare system, contributing to higher welfare expenses. In large however, this (welfare magnet) hypothesis seems to be unsubstantiated. In a communication document the European Commission (2013a) referred to a number of studies (Dustmann et al, 2010; Kahanec and Zimmerman, 2010; CEPS 2013; ICF GHK, 2013; OECD, 2013; Preston, 2013) and EU statistics, that mobile EU citizens are net contributors in taxes, unlikely to burden the host country’s welfare system and that they, in comparison to nationals, are equally or less likely to receive social benefits. In addition, recent studies and reviews (CEPS, 2013; ICF GHK, 2013) have found no evidence for the ‘welfare magnet hypothesis’. Generally it seems that macroeconomic factors such as unemployment rates have a larger impact on intra-EU migration or movements than generosity of welfare systems (Giulietti and Kahanec, 2013).

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<sup>12</sup> These are outlined in article 7.1 a-d of the directive. In short, the requirements are employment, sufficient resources, enrollment in studies or belonging to the family of a person fulfilling one of those requirements.

<sup>13</sup> In the literature, these countries are often referred to as A8 and A2 countries. A8 refers to the eight countries with the lowest GDP among the ten countries that joined the EU in 2004. A2 refers to the two countries that joined the EU in 2007.

## Needs and solutions at the local level

Homelessness and extreme vulnerability among intra-EU citizens imposes new challenges at the local level. It seems that initially local actors oriented their services at the needs homeless have in general. Yet, studies on homeless citizens in Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2013) and the UK (Fitzpatrick et al, 2012) respectively have shown that the indigenous homeless population differs in important aspects when compared to citizens. The Swedish study, which is a rough appreciation of the number of homeless people without permanent residence permit<sup>14</sup> in Sweden, suggests that there is a lower prevalence of alcohol/substance abuse and mental disorders in this group than in the indigenous homeless population<sup>15</sup>. The study was carried out by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare using a survey which was sent to all Swedish municipalities and the largest organizations working with the homeless. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare also notes that homeless intra-EU citizens should not be referred to traditional help organizations since their needs differ from those of the “traditional” homeless population. The UK study was conducted using structured interviews with 452 people in contact with organizations providing services for the homeless. It showed that the EU citizens and the indigenous population differed in complexity of problems<sup>16</sup> and time when the problems emerged. The problems in the EU citizen population generally started to occur after they came to the UK. Although none of these results can be generalized to a broader population, these two studies suggest that traditional homeless services may not be well adjusted to meet the needs of homeless intra-EU citizens; instead questions regarding new kinds of support and strategies emerge. Consequently, it is important to study local examples of adjustments to these new challenges in order to pave the way for discussion on and evolvement of better practice.

An evaluation on social and economic impacts of the free movement on the local level commissioned by the European Commission was published in 2014 (EY, 2014). The evaluation concerns six European cities (Barcelona, Dublin, Hamburg, Lille, Prague and Turin). It examined the impact of the freedom of movement from different perspectives, such

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<sup>14</sup> In the study, this mainly concerns intra-EU citizens.

<sup>15</sup> Note that the conclusion does not refer to a statistical analysis. It is rather an observation made when the material was compared to the most recent indigenous homeless count.

<sup>16</sup> In the study, a number of theoretical and empirical indicators of problems connected to homelessness (such as substance abuse) was applied to measure complexity of problems.

as economic impact and impact on policy making. The evaluation included a list of best practices chosen on the basis of innovation, impacts on the local level, relevance and potential for replication (although it remains unknown how these assessments were made). Since the practices concerned intra-EU citizens in large, they represent a quite diverse array of initiatives. Yet, these practices did not consider poor and/or homeless intra-EU citizens specifically. Local initiatives and practices to respond to homelessness among intra-EU citizens have been investigated in a report commissioned by the Committee of the Regions (CSES, 2010). The report identified a varying array of responses by local authorities and NGOs, and repatriation is highlighted as an example of good practice with the argument that support networks might be wider in the countries of origin. There has also been research specifically on homeless Polish citizens in other member states from different perspectives such as the citizens' welfare capital (Mostowska, 2011), the citizens' social networks (Mostowska, 2013) and framing of the problem from the perspective of professionals (Mostowska, 2014).

In conclusion, homeless intra-EU citizens across at least some of the member states seem to be increasing. This group is not likely to have social rights equivalent to the indigenous population. Furthermore, they may have needs that diverge from the indigenous homeless population. Since this is a relatively new phenomenon, local organizations or authorities may have to adjust or create new services as a response. To our knowledge, there have only been a few studies focusing on the issue. Therefore, enhancing knowledge in this field is urgent.

### **Social citizenship and social exclusion**

This small investigation fills some knowledge gaps bridging several research areas. It reveals to the tension between EU member states' goal of encouraging and facilitating migration under just conditions and the desire to limit access to national welfare institutions.

Theoretically it is linked to the relationship between social citizenship and citizenship in the European Union (Bommes and Geddes, 2000, Hansen and Brian Hager, 2010, Lokrantz and Bernitz, 2006). The concept of social citizenship deals with the principles that govern access to material resources as well as how these principles are implemented. The concept in other words encompasses the relationship between the nation state and the citizens and also includes how institutional practices and relations affect people's possibilities to control their own lives. Of relevance is also the concept of social exclusion. This concept goes back to

1970's France, where the socially excluded were defined as individuals who were administratively excluded by the nation state in that they were placed outside of the social insurance system (Duffy, 1995). A similar definition is also in use within the UN's development program. The socially excluded are here defined as individuals who are not granted or lack access to legal resources to realize basic rights (Sayce, 2000). The question of social exclusion is intimately related to the conditions of citizenship. Schierup (2006) e.g. describes social exclusion as a limited citizenship and argues that certain groups are systematically deprived of the minimum of economic, political and socio-cultural resources necessary to sustain a socially acceptable existence and to participate as a "full member of society". He maintains that citizens and ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to exclusionary processes, although the specific categories that become excluded may be dependent on the institutional framework of the welfare state. The socially excluded have become a common European political and social concern, and are one of the most vivid manifestations of an increasingly disturbing "European dilemma" (Schierup, 2006).

The issue of vulnerable EU citizens also deals with priorities within the local social services, that is, how and why resources are distributed between different groups of people in need. Priorities in the public sector are based on more or less conscious choices based on beliefs about needs, what legitimacy they have and what resources the municipality has to offer, but of course also on legislation related to the local context and the EU. Focusing on various EU member states the question of intuitional contexts arises and how governmental and non-governmental actors interact in the distribution of welfare. Here the literature on welfare pluralism and the mixed economy of welfare is central. In contrast to much of the welfare state literature, the production of welfare is here not only seen as a state activity. Instead it assumes a broader perspective including a variety of societal actors: the state, the market, the social partners and the voluntary/third sector and the informal sector (Everts, 1995; Powell, 2007). The complex phenomenon of dealing with vulnerable EU citizens implies a new and so far unknown challenge for the social services and other welfare providers, particularly as regards the division of responsibility between them. This issue is of course also embedded in the debate about Europeanization and the discussion on how domestic policies, welfare providers and institutions adapt to European level influences. The directive of freedom of movement within the European Union is one example of how EU regulation is becoming increasingly important for national social policy.

## **Method**

The approach of this small-scale study is explorative and consists of interviews with six respondents each representing an organization that provides services for vulnerable intra-EU citizens. The interviews were carried out during winter 2014-2015. The selection of organizations can be described as (not statistically) random/arbitrary. The respondents represent organizations from Glasgow, Oslo, Berlin, London and Amsterdam. Interviews were conducted long-distance via the Internet using Skype. In addition, an example of a local project in Stockholm/Sweden is presented.

## ***Sample***

The selection of service providers was carried out on the basis that they must provide services for intra-EU citizens. Furthermore, heterogeneity in terms of which country they operate in was desirable. Organizations were sought exclusively in non-accession countries such as the Scandinavian countries, Germany, the UK etc. since labor market conditions and other macroeconomic factors were presumed to attract EU citizens living in distressed situation in their home countries. Apart from those strategic elements, the selection of organizations was carried out on the basis of which were found and agreed to participate. We did not employ any specific strategy to incorporate governmental service providers in the sample, which has resulted in a sample consisting of non-governmental organizations exclusively. Several reasons might explain that. One might be the general larger engagement of civil society in continental countries in the provision of welfare compared to the Nordic countries. It might also be possible that homelessness is an area where civil society traditionally is involved in a high degree and the step to include rough sleeping EU migrants might be rather close. However, it is quite obvious that governmental services are involved in efforts to help EU migrants and in all our examples they do play a significant role. However, as already mentioned, the sample is not a part of a larger, controlled population and it is unknown to what degree the sample corresponds to other services throughout the EU.

## ***Looking for local projects – different approaches***

In order to find organizations or projects that work specifically with intra-EU citizens different approaches were used. This was done during fall 2014. At this stage, a wide scope of what was of interest was used as to not overlook any organization. Contacts were made primarily using e-mail but identification of potential service providers was done using

different methods. Thematically these can be separated but the approaches were used in an integrated manner. These were:

- Searching the Internet using search relevant phrases (and secondly browsing hits and following up on potentially useful documents and/or websites).
- Contacting people potentially aware of local initiatives.

Throughout the process, different combinations of English words and phrases<sup>17</sup> were used in an Internet search engine. Very few of these searches resulted in a direct hit regarding information about a specific project or organization. However, some of the hits had links to other websites that had such information or to other relevant sites. Websites providing information and contact details to organizations of interest were also used. In such cases all organizations that presumably could match the description were contacted. Contact was made via e-mail in every case when there was any information suggesting that a specific organization had a service for intra-EU citizens. In total roughly 100 different attempts of contact via e-mail were made and most of them were unanswered.

In addition to searching the Internet for projects, information was obtained by reaching out to (sometimes) relevant people with knowledge of such projects. In many cases this strategy proved to be successful although time-consuming. For example, responses to e-mail messages could take more than a month. Since many of the e-mail conversations were not directly with targeted organizations, contact chains in a few instances were fairly long.

Using the English language, both for searching the Internet and for communication, can affect the results. Since some websites lacked English translations or only had parts translated into English the searches probably resulted in adverse selection of hits towards projects in English speaking countries. When hits led to websites in non-English languages, an online translation service was used. Using a computer-managed translation service might lead to (apparent) mistranslations causing the reader to make faulty interpretations of the information.

Additionally there was one e-mail response clearly stating that there could be no further e-mail contact since English was not a preferred language. One could suppose that at least some of the unanswered messages were results of the same issue.

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. *intra-EU migra\*/migrant\**, *mobile EU citizen\**, *A8 (and/or) A2 migrant\**, *homeless\**, *unemploy\**, *social\* exclu\**, *help organization\**, *shelter\**, *roma*. When there had been suggestions of some kind of initiative in specific cities, these were combined with city names.

### ***Procedure***

The information regarding the activities directed at vulnerable EU citizens was collected using semi-structured long-distance interviews with representatives of each organization. The interviews were recorded and summarized, but not transcribed. An interview schedule was used, although not in a strict manner. Since some of the questions were deemed too detailed<sup>18</sup> during the interviews, these were left out. Questions mainly concerned the background of the project, funding and what kind of services was provided. Prior to the interviews, the respondents got an information letter with a short background of the study and information about conditions of participation.

### **Reflections based on the search for projects**

In relation to the size of this project, a considerable effort was put into the search for organizations or projects that provide services for intra-EU citizens. Thus, some reflections on what was suggested by findings during the search are in place. Since these are mere reflections they should be considered with caution and cannot be considered representative of what kind of initiatives exist. Generally, there seems to be quite few well-established projects or organizations providing services exclusively or primarily for intra-EU citizens. Instead, organizations or projects include intra-EU citizens to different degrees. For instance, a homeless shelter or other service might have no eligibility requirement based on nationality or no specific target group in terms of migrant/non-migrant. In other words, services may very well be available and used by intra-EU citizens although the service provider is not specialized in providing services for this group. Service providers may experience that a larger proportion of service users consists of intra-EU citizens although they cannot or deem it unnecessary to change the existing structure of service provision. Lack of political will and/or controversy on public funding or form of support can also be reasons not to establish targeted services.

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<sup>18</sup> E.g. if the projects were evaluated and how. Small scale projects may have little resources to evaluate.

## **Local projects in selected cities**

In this section presentations of the organizations are made in a descriptive manner. Since the organizations and services are highly varied and due to the descriptive approach, they are presented separately. All information is based on the interviews and e-mail contact with the respondents, if not stated otherwise. In a second part, similarities and differences are identified regarding first initiative, type of organization, target group, content of activities and time perspective.

### *Local projects*

#### **1. Amsterdam – AMOC (De Regenboog Groep)<sup>19</sup>**

De Regenboog Groep provides services for the homeless in Amsterdam. AMOC is one of their drop-in day centers and shelters.

AMOC was started in the 1980's mainly in order to provide services for German drug users. At that time, the German embassy funded the operation. However, since a few years the target group has shifted to homeless intra-EU citizens, especially from the Central and Eastern European countries. Also, the service users are not necessarily drug users anymore. When the target group started shifting, there were complaints from the social workers in AMOC that the atmosphere was affected by differences between service users with complex problems such as drug addiction or psychiatric disorders and others. The other group of service users consists of people who have come to Amsterdam in order to find employment, accommodation etc. but have not succeeded yet and do not have complex problems. AMOC has now chosen to primarily focus on intra-EU migrants with more complex problems. The city council in Amsterdam funds all of De Regenboog Groep's day centers and shelters, including AMOC. In addition, minor parts of the funding are provided by private donations. Although the operations are funded by the city council in Amsterdam, De Regenboog Groep is free to organize their work in their own way. A few years ago, the city council wanted them to cease working with homeless intra-EU citizens because they thought it would attract more potential service users to come to Amsterdam. However, the city council later changed their minds.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.deregenboog.org/waar/amoc>

AMOC serves as both a day centre and shelter for homeless people in Amsterdam. The service employs social workers with special language competence (mainly Central and Eastern European languages) to match the most common languages among homeless intra-EU citizens in Amsterdam. At AMOC service users may take a shower, have something to eat or drink and speak to a social worker about their situation. In some cases AMOC has provided service users with financial support by for example paying for service users' medication. AMOC also cooperates with medical practitioners and lawyers to provide medical and legal support/advice. It is also possible to get access to AMOC's shelter which has the capacity of taking 15 people per night. However, to access the shelter there must be some kind of emergency situation at hand. One of the social workers employed by De Regenboog Groep decides if the person applying for staying at the shelter is in such a situation. Emergency situations could be that the person is ill and in need of some kind of medical attention or has a plan for repatriation. According to the respondent, there is another shelter in Amsterdam with the capacity of 200 people which can be accessed by intra-EU citizens.

## **2. Berlin – Frostschutzengel (GEBEWO)<sup>20</sup>**

Frostschutzengel (FSE) is a small project situated in Berlin, which was launched by the diaconal organization GEBEWO in cooperation with Caritas in 2012. FSE provides advice to homeless intra-EU citizens, support existing homeless services in Berlin and works with advocacy/awareness rising. The intra-EU citizens' countries of origin are mainly Central or Eastern European countries.

FSE started due to that it was noted that homeless service users in Berlin were increasingly composed of intra-EU citizens. However, the local authorities decided not to fund any specific services for foreign citizens. GEBEWO then formulated the project idea of FSE. In the beginning, it was meant to be active only during winter because there are additional homeless services during winter in Berlin. GEBEWO then managed to get funding for FSE from a foundation, enabling them to have the service all year round for two years. From the beginning it was a small scale project starting with three employees, reducing the number to

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.gebewo.de/>

two part-time employees but since 2015, the FSE is officially a part of the GEBEWO and their activities are planned to be extended. A requirement for being employed in the project is proficiency in another European language (e.g. Bulgarian, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, English and Polish).

FSE provides advice for intra-EU citizens using homeless services in Berlin. FSE works outreaching and meet their clients in various centers and shelters for homeless people. The advice can consist of help to appeal social benefit decisions, providing information about right to benefits, information about different services or agencies etc. There are no eligibility criteria for getting advice from FSE and there is no specific time limit of the advice although informally the latter depends on demand since FSE cannot provide advice to an unlimited number of people at the same time. FSE also provides support for the existing homeless service provider system in Berlin (other NGOs). The aim of that support is to improve the work being done at other homeless services by for example giving advice to social workers in the homeless services on how to help homeless intra-EU citizens. Additionally, FSE aims to be a part of the official discussion on homeless intra-EU citizens.

### **3. Glasgow – Advocacy Service (Crossroads)<sup>21</sup>**

Situated in a part of Glasgow, Scotland, called Govanhill there was a service run between 2007 and 2012 by the community development, non-governmental organization Crossroads. The service, called Advocacy Service (AS), provided translation, information and guidance for newly arrived intra-EU citizens. Govanhill is an area characterized by large proportions of citizens, poverty and low employment opportunities.

AS started in 2006-2007 when it was noted that a new group of people had settled in Govanhill. The group mainly consisted of people from a specific village in Eastern Slovakia. Many of these turned out to be Roma. The respondent appreciated the number of people that arrived to approximately 3000 people in total (over a few years). According to a document sent by the respondent that presents Govanhill, the Roma population in the area represents 70% of Scotland's Roma population. In the beginning of the inflow of Slovakian citizens, no

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cyca.org.uk/index.html>

one within the organization knew exactly where they came from and what language they spoke. A partnership organization who had launched a health service in the area also reported a sudden increase in inquiries for registration from the newly arrived group. As a response, Crossroads and a few different organizations and projects hosted a meeting with people from the group in order to help them make the necessary registrations and in order to gather knowledge of any needs within the group.

Crossroads then applied for funding for the AS, which was granted. The funding came from the Scottish government and stretched for three years. In addition, relatively small amounts of EU funding were granted. Some of the funding came indirectly from the Scottish government in the sense that different organizations or foundations granted funding but the funding mostly originated from the government. The extent of the project was limited to one part-time employee at first but when inquiries for the service grew, the service adapted to a larger scale. However, capacity was still a problem, mainly concerning making long-term plans. Additional employees were sometimes temporary and on an on/off-basis due to short-term funding. At most, there were two full-time and one part-time employee. Since the demand for the service continued to increase, while funding did not, the management of Crossroads decided the service should be shut down. Doing this, the management argued that the government should maintain such services.

The AS mainly provided office-based mediatory, informational or translation services. The services were conducted in Slovak. The respondent refers to the service as a “blank” service, i.e. that it did not have a specific content. The service users could come for appointments and describe the problem they experienced. In many cases this resulted in a referral to an appropriate agency or organization. Often these matters were closely connected to language difficulties and navigating in Scottish society. Employees’ language competence was imperative because of the nature of the service and due to that most service users did not speak English. Since no clear restrictions were applied in terms of what kind of problems the AS could manage, problems could vary. Some problems regarded registration for school or for a nursery, or generally low school attendance among the children in the group (in these cases motivational efforts were made). Exploitation was a severe problem, and many of these problems originated from the relation to the agency who organized the trip from Slovakia to Scotland. For a fee, the agency had promised accommodation and jobs along with the trip from Slovakia to Scotland. According to the respondent, the agency was prosecuted for fraud

later on. The problems that related to exploitation were overcrowding in apartments, low housing standards, high rents, ID fraud, stolen passports, missing payments of salaries, unpaid work and missing documents for working contracts etc. Many of the service users were illiterate and some had never filled out a form or made a phone call before, which made contact with public agencies and other organizations difficult. In cases needed, the AS referred people to food banks, clothes provisions, local churches etc. In some of these cases the service users did not want to leave Govanhill, which was problematic since the other services were in neighboring areas.

Cooperation occurred with several other NGOs such as Glasgow's Regeneration Agency to run a Roma Employability Service, or Govanhill Law Centre, Govanhill Free Church or an organization called Bridging the Gap, whose project, Understanding Each Other, has been developed and delivered in collaboration with Crossroads, is aiming to promote cohesion between communities in Govanhill.

#### **4. London – Providence Row<sup>22</sup>**

Providence Row (PR) is an old catholic NGO working with homeless in London. They provide a range of services and to people coming in large extent from the accession countries (A8 and A2, approx. 30%). PR has not developed specific services for intra-EU citizens. Instead they have adapted the existing services to match the aforementioned client group.

Together with another NGOs<sup>23</sup> working with homeless in London and a local authority, exchanges between service providers in Poland and Romania and London have been arranged. This has been done by visiting service providers in Poland and Romania and by arranging visits to London for these service providers. PR plans to continue these exchanging experiences.

PR's funding comes from the local government, private trusts, companies and own revenues. The local government funds services such as housing/benefit advice and reconnections.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.providencerow.org.uk/who-we-are>

<sup>23</sup> Thames Reach's Tower Hamlets Street Outreach Response Team (SORT) and the Tower Hamlets local authority

Services regarding employability are mainly funded by trusts and companies. The funding from companies is often earmarked for a special purpose. PR maintains 23 full-time equivalent workers and 3-4 volunteers per day.

The respondent argues that there are two main solutions for homeless intra-EU citizens in London. One is to find employment and the other is repatriation (to return to their country of origin). PRs target group are those who cannot find employment but refuse repatriation (which is available through services such as London Reconnection Team and BARKA UK). PR has mainly chosen to focus on the employment option. The respondent describes the intra-EU migrant clients as fairly job ready although they can lack English proficiency and in some cases have inadequate qualifications. In very few cases there have been people with high support needs due to alcohol/substance abuse or mental health problems. According to the respondent, there is one residential unit in London where intra-EU citizens can be eligible to access (Olallo House<sup>24</sup>) which has 6-7 beds. There are, however, many organizations like PR.

All services provided by PR are available to intra-EU citizens. PR runs a kitchen where the users can work for a period of time in order to get some work experience. The kitchen makes breakfast every day which is sold for five pence. This was traditionally a soup kitchen. PR is also planning to make a similar arrangement with gardening. They have also cooperated with companies to arrange job training. In addition to this they have a team working with employment and training support to help clients to get employment. PR runs a learning program with activities such as arts, music, gardening, mindfulness, cooking, a job class and an English class. In order to adapt to the group of intra-EU citizens PR has employed people with knowledge of the most common spoken languages within the group. Another example of adjustment is that they have adjusted the training schemes (which was originally aimed at people with high support needs) to make them shorter for people with few support needs (which according to the respondent matches the group consisting of intra-EU citizens).

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.saintjohnofgod.org/servicedetail.php?passedid=37>

## **5. London – Southwark Street Population Outreach Team (St Mungo’s Broadway)<sup>25</sup>**

The Street Population Outreach Team (SPOT) in Southwark is commissioned by the local authorities to conduct outreach work in the Southwark borough of London. SPOT targets all rough sleepers in Southwark and many of these are intra-EU citizens. SPOT is a part of St Mungo’s Broadway, an NGO providing services such as shelters/hostels and day centers for the homeless in London as well as other cities. St Mungo's Broadway was formed in April 2014 by the merger of two homelessness charities; St Mungo's and Broadway. Funding for SPOT comes from the local authorities on a three year basis.

SPOT has created a special position called EEA coordinator (an outreach volunteer). The position was established since one employee in the SPOT team with a Polish background established a connection with Polish service providers and thus made reconnections smoother. The employee was made EEA coordinator, which also includes a certain responsibility for keeping up with changes in benefit eligibility etc. SPOT also employs a number of volunteers who knows common languages used among EU citizens. According to the respondent, language is crucial when working with non-UK nationals.

SPOT’s work includes identifying rough sleepers and making assessments of their needs and possibilities to get access to other services. If possible, SPOT refers rough sleepers to the local authority project called No Second Night Out which is an assessment center that refers rough sleepers to other services. During the time for the assessment, clients can stay at a special temporary shelter. SPOT’s work also includes arranging for reconnections, which in the case of intra-EU citizens means returning to the country of origin. If needed, this can be arranged by the London Reconnection Team (another service provided by another NGO called Thames Reach). Additionally, the EEA coordinator in SPOT has set up a discussion group in St Mungo’s Broadway to share knowledge on intra-EU citizens from Central and Eastern European countries. St Mungos Broadway will also apply for funding for a new project targeting Polish homeless citizens in London with addictions.

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/services/managing\\_homelessness/street\\_outreach\\_teams](http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/services/managing_homelessness/street_outreach_teams)

## **6. Oslo - The Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army (SA) provides services for homeless intra-EU citizens residing in Oslo. The services are provided through a shelter and a day-centre. In addition they have launched a community development project in Romania, as a response to their largest service user group.

The Salvation Army in Oslo got involved in working with intra-EU citizens who lack social rights during winter 2010-2011. At that time, Oslo had a large inflow of people from the Roma population in Romania. Many of them lacked accommodation in Oslo and were living outdoors. Approximately 60% of service users now are Roma people from Romania. The remaining part of the service users is composed of different nationalities. It was noted that the fiscal crisis accelerated inflows from Spain, Greece etc. Around 70% are men. The largest group makes their living by begging or playing music in the streets, collecting bottles and selling flowers. Many of these can be considered being far from the labor market due to that many speak neither Norwegian nor English and due to a lack of education.

As a response to this, a homeless shelter especially targeting this group was started. The initiative to do this came from discussions between the SA and the city of Oslo where both agreed that something should be done. At some point during winter 2010-2011 (which according to the respondent was especially cold) the city of Oslo called for a meeting with different NGOs operating in the city, asking if any of these could launch a homeless service for the group. The SA now operates a homeless shelter financed by the city of Oslo. In addition the SA has launched other services for the group. One of these services was an already existing day-centre for people with addictions. However, the emergence of conflicts between the previous clientele and the new group made the SA set up separate opening hours for the two groups.

As mentioned above, the city of Oslo funds the homeless shelter the SA runs. The other services and initiatives however, are mainly funded by the SA. The day center is mainly funded by SA but also partially funded by the city of Oslo and the Norwegian state government (the latter has earmarked an amount of money for contributions to services for vulnerable intra-EU citizens). The services in Oslo have approximately one and a half full-time workers all year round but during wintertime three full-time workers are employed in the

shelter service. In addition to the employed there are also volunteers working in the projects. The developmental project in Romania is funded by the EEA/Norway Grants.

During the first winter, the homeless shelter was quite simple, consisting of a room with mattresses. Since then, the shelter has upgraded and has now the capacity to shelter 200-250 people per night (however there has been approximately 140 people at the most). While only open during winter, a limit of minus ten degrees Celsius has been set by the city of Oslo (i.e. the shelter is not open at higher temperatures), though the limit has now been changed to the experience of minus ten degrees (e.g. when wind is strong). During such weather, intra-EU citizens in Oslo might apply for a night's stay at the shelter from the emergency health care. This is officially required for staying at the shelter. However, when there have been potential service users showing up without a ticket they have been allowed to use the services despite this. One other shelter (run by two NGOs) especially targeted at the group in question is open during the whole year.

The day center is open for intra-EU citizens three days a week. At the day center the service users can shower, have a cup of coffee and a bit of food. Showers can only be used once per week due to a high demand (60-70 people are using the showers each day it is available). There is a booking system to make sure this rule is followed. The day center also provides access to telephone and Internet. Previously, the day center also distributes clothes; however, the demand for this service was higher than could be managed so the SA decided to close it. The SA also does outreach work, which mainly consists of checking which people are in Oslo, what their needs may be etc. In the beginning they handed out flyers to make the target group aware of the services, since then knowledge of the service has been spread word-of-mouth and through the outreach work.

In addition to the services in Norway, SA has initiated two community centers in two different cities in Romania. These projects aim to enable access to schools for children, jobs for adults and access to health care. The SA aims to help the targeted population in the country of origin rather than in Norway. However, during their stay in Norway SA aims to enable a dignified existence. Since the beginning of the work with intra-EU citizens SA has worked actively to cooperate with the SA in Romania by asking the Romanian SA workers to come to Oslo and work with the projects. This has proven to be successful because of the

importance of having someone who knows the language. Since the start of the services in Romania, there has always been a Norwegian worker active in those services.

## **7. Stockholm and Crossroads**

Intra-EU migration has also been a hot topic in Swedish public debate for a few years. A large proportion of the debate has been focused on the presence of EU citizens from accession countries trying to earn a living by begging or playing music in the streets or other public areas in the cities. In Stockholm, this has been frequently discussed in media. Furthermore, Stockholm seems to be the municipality where most homeless intra-EU citizens reside (Socialstyrelsen, 2013). In response to this issue, several NGOs have launched initiatives to work actively by supporting the group. This has in many cases been done in cooperation with the municipality. There have been initiatives such as shelters and housing to support homeless intra-EU citizens specifically. For example, one shelter called Vinternatt (eng. Winter Night) is a cooperative service run by several NGOs and is funded by Stockholm city.

Another initiative in Stockholm is Crossroads, which started in 2011 and provides services for vulnerable intra-EU citizens. A description of the service is presented in the methodology manual<sup>26</sup> (Crossroads, 2014) released in connection<sup>27</sup> with a conference that marked the ending of the ESF funding period of the initiative 2014<sup>27</sup>. Crossroads is described as collaboration between two NGOs (the Stockholm City Mission and the Salvation Army), the local government (Stockholm city) and a national public agency (the Swedish Public Employment Service). Funding has primarily been provided by Stockholm city and the Swedish Public Employment Service (60%) and by the European Social Fund (40%). However, additional funding was provided by the two NGOs. The Stockholm City mission is the project owner.

Services in the Crossroads project are carried out through the operation of a day center. In general, the services can be understood as consisting of two distinct parts, a basic needs service and an advice service. The basic needs service consists of a reception desk service,

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<sup>26</sup> The manual can be accessed online via <http://www.stadsmissionen.se/Socialverksamhet/Hemloshet1/Crossroads/Crossroads-metodhandbok/>

<sup>27</sup> The ending conference was carried out in connection with the time that the funding period from ESF ended rather than the termination of the project. During the conference, the manager of the project stated that Crossroads would continue to provide services however under different funding circumstances.

access to showers and washing machines, distribution of clothes, food and access to computers with an Internet connection. The advice service consists of individual meetings between employees entitled EU-advisors and participants. During these meetings matters like housing options and job-seeking are discussed. In addition, other services carried out by volunteers and group activities are provided. For instance, such services can be legal advice by law students, Swedish language courses or translations into Swedish.

Crossroads keep statistics on its participants using different forms of questionnaires. Statistics consider visits and participation frequency and background information on the participants. A participant survey was carried out in 2013. From 2011 and 2013 Crossroads has been visited by approximately 7000 individuals averaging 127 visits per day in 2013. The composition of the group changed over time indicating that the group contacting Crossroads is rather mobile. The visitors are mainly men (92%) and mainly third country nationals with a residence permit in another EU country (62%). The largest group considering country of origin is Romanians (25%) including large minorities and Roma people.

### ***Similarities and differences***

Comparing these local initiatives more similarities than differences occur. In particular two features need to be emphasized: one is the role of NGOs and the other one is the complexity of needs this group has resulting in an engagement of a large variety of stakeholders. In all countries NGOs have taken the role as the main help provider or at least as the mediators to possible ways of support; most of these are organizations with a long history whereas only some are new and consequently rather small (e.g. Frostschtzengel in Berlin) but are a part of larger NGOs. Yet, the NGOs are not the only help providers but are depending and using competencies and resources of other stakeholders, mirroring the broad variety of needs EU citizens have. The necessity of a holistic approach is thus a pervading feature in for example the scope of cooperation partners that span from medical doctors, lawyers, other NGOs and local and national public authorities to cooperation with service providers in Rumania and Poland. This does not include engagement of single persons or private associations that in some local sites seem to engage quite intensively with the situation of vulnerable EU citizens. Consequently, the financing structure contains of various actors as well such as local authorities, private donations and the European Social Fund (ESF). The financing situation in three of the examples is not sure, the project in Glasgow was shut down because of increasing demands (and probably increasing costs), whereas the activities are permanent in the other

four cities. The vulnerable situation of EU citizens is also reflected in the spectra of tasks the NGOs work with reaching from dealing with homelessness, drug abuse and poverty in general and providing for day- centers, shelters, food, clothing, information, language skills, job training and so on.

**Table 1. Overview of selected local activities in some European countries in 2014.**

	Type of organization /seize	Cooperation	Target group	Permanent - temporary	Financing	Activities
<b>Amsterdam</b>	NGO	With medical doctors, lawyers	Homeless intra EU citizens	In risk of laid down but continues so far	City council in Amsterdam, private donations	Drop-in day centers, shelters, showers, food,
<b>Berlin</b>	NGO	Cooperation with other NGOs	Homeless intra EU citizens	Now permanent	Donations	Advice, information, Advocacy
<b>Glasgow</b>	NGO	Partnership with other NGOs	EU citizens (Slovakia, Czechs)	Shut down, demands too high	Scottish government	Office based information and guidance services, translation, referrals to other organizations
<b>London (PR)</b>	NGO	Cooperation with service providers in Poland and Romania	Homeless in London	Permanent	Local government, private trust, companies	Offer work experiences, job training, learning program, advice, support
<b>London</b>	NGO	Cooperation with other NGOs (e.g. London Reconnection Team)	All rough sleepers in Southwark	Permanent	Local authorities	Advice, guidance, temporary shelter, outreach work
<b>Oslo</b>	NGO	Community development project in Rumania	Homeless intra EU citizens	Permanent	Oslo municipality, SA	Shelter, day centers, outreach work, food, shower, Romania SA
<b>Stockholm</b>	NGO	Salvation Army, Stockholm city, national public employment service	Vulnerable EU-citizens and third-country nationals with permanent residence in another EU country	Permanent	ESF, Stockholm city, City Mission, Salvation Army	Day center, basic needs and advice, Help with job seeking

Regarding the content of the activities it is possible to roughly distinguish four approaches of services: a) help with basic need, b) informational/advice services, c) job training and employment support, d) repatriation and e) advocacy. These five approaches also stand for different ideas about how the inflow of vulnerable EU citizens should be solved. Help with basic needs limits support to emergency cases whereas informational/advice services and job training/employment support could be understood as that integration in the host country is possible. Repatriation in contrast is a clear message for that the problem of the target group should be solved in the home country. The last and least common approach is advocacy implying that the situation of this group needs attention not only in the concrete living situation but on a policy level.

The most restrictive approach is repatriation. One example of service providers working with repatriation is the London Reconnection Team and BARKA that are both cooperation partners of SPOT and Providence Row (London). The latter is a Polish organization operating in the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands. The rationale behind such an approach is that providing support is the responsibility of the home country. Repatriation can however also imply that resources are sent to from the host to the home country in form of cooperation with Rumanian or Polish NGOs.

Help initiatives providing for example shelter, food, hygiene, medical support etc are a common initiative. Quite clearly, these services address immediate needs, and are thought as short term measures. This can be seen for example in the Salvation Army in Oslo, the AMOC in Amsterdam, Crossroads in Stockholm but also in AS in Glasgow where e.g. help with stolen passports was offered.

The most far reaching approach includes services such as information and advice about the host country, including information on eligibility criteria for benefits, help with appeal of social benefit decisions, information about other services or benefits etc. These kinds of services are most prominently seen in the Advocacy Service (Glasgow), AMOC (Amsterdam) and Frostschutzengel (Berlin), although these kinds of services probably to some degree exist in any kind of service provision. The logic behind an informational/advice approach can be the insight that the situation of vulnerable EU citizens will not be solved in a short run, and

the necessity to inform EU citizens about the respective welfare systems, including a picture of rights and/or limitations of rights regarding access to support possibilities. An adjacent approach comes from the initiatives regarding employment. This can be seen in Providence Row (London) and somewhat in Crossroad in Stockholm's advice service as well as the Advocacy Service (Glasgow). In both the advice and the employment approach the underlying rationale could be that integration is a viable option.

The last strategy (advocacy) implies an active role of the NGO to influence policy makers in framing the situation of vulnerable EU citizens moving to other countries. This is only explicitly mentioned by the FES in Berlin. However, one can assume that the close participation between public and private providers in several other countries practically also result in lifting the situation of distressed EU citizens on a policy level.

Of course, several strategies are used simultaneously. The three projects from the UK for example use both the help in emergency and integration strategy at the same time.

### **Some answers to a fairly new issue**

Open borders, new migration patterns and unclear responsibility allocation between EU and member states have made poverty and marginalization more visible in many Western societies. While such problems are well-known, they pose profound challenges for national welfare states and in particular local social services that often have the primary responsibility for inhabitants, including foreign nationals who visit but are not citizens. So far, we lack knowledge however on how local social service providers deal with this responsibility, what solutions exist and what considerations underpin actual strategies. This study intended to give some answers.

Of course, the phenomenon of extreme vulnerability in form of people in the streets asking for help is not a new issue. It had been a reality in many countries throughout Europe before the emergence of social policy. Yet, poverty in that form was seen as belonging to the past, something that had been eradicated in modern welfare states. Citizens in particular in affluent welfare states feel helpless and extremely uncomfortable when seeing people sleeping on the streets or in wild camps and local politicians seem to be caught off guard. As our small study shows, different strategies are used that reach from mainly providing help for basic needs, to providing information/advice and/or job seeking support, repatriation and advocacy; often a

mix of several strategies exist. Hardly astonishing, organizations that are experienced in work with homeless are the ones that take the role as coordinators or main help providers, yet mostly in cooperation with a broad spectrum of other agencies. Since the phenomena of vulnerable EU citizens probably will not disappear in the near future we may expect a broader variety of local solutions over time.

The development of a or several viable strategy(ies) on the local level for managing the situation of vulnerable intra-EU citizens has of course to be seen in the context of existing settings: of different responsibilities for local welfare services, the general level of social policy ambition within the country but also the often complex needs of this group.

The group intra-EU citizens leaving their countries for the search of a better life is a heterogeneous group consisting of e.g. single middle-aged workers from south Europe as well as whole groups of Roma people coming from Rumania or Bulgaria. Different groups imply different profiles of needs. Several studies have indicated that there are dissimilarities between the “traditional” homeless population and the “new” homeless population implying that existing local service provision schemes are not adequate to provide help to this new group. This finding emerged also in our study and calls for a development of other strategies. Obvious is that language competence among the staff seems to be considered a precondition for any kind of service. The role of NGOs seems also to be crucial. Irrespective of city (and thus type of welfare state the city is located in) NGOs take a large part of the responsibility, indicating that this new problem might provoke a changed division of responsibility between welfare actors.

When it comes to the provision of welfare services, widely different settings and levels of ambitions exist throughout Europe. Within the frame of this study we were not able to capture the entire landscape of support provided by different organizations and actors within the selected cities but just provide an example of a single activity. The level of ambition of different welfare states was addressed earlier and the assumption discussed that economically disadvantaged and unemployed people supposedly travel to countries with a more generous welfare system. The focus of these studies however was the use of social benefits in more generous welfare states and with this focus no empirical support for the assumption was found. We do not know if countries with the reputation of being a generous welfare state result in a greater inflow of EU citizens that do not apply for benefits but try to make a living

in other ways. We can be sure about that there will be no spontaneous decrease in EU citizens moving to more affluent countries, as we can be sure that an economical and socio-political adjustment between the European nations during the next couple of years will not happen. Thus, vulnerability of EU citizens will increasingly constitute a challenge for the individual European countries.

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