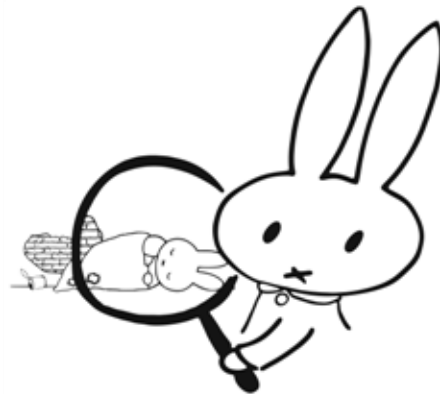




## **Justice on the Streets**

# **Participatory Action Research about the discrimination of street homeless people in Budapest**



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*Justice on the Streets* research team

Budapest, October 30, 2012.

## II. Introduction

### a. *The City is For All*

In *The City is For All* (A Város Mindenkié, AVM), homeless people, those without adequate housing and their allies are working together for an egalitarian and fair society. Our group, which is based on voluntary work, aims to stand up for the dignity of poor and homeless people and fight for the right to housing. Homeless people play a key role in every activity of the group. One of AVM's three working groups is the *public space working group* that has set out to protect the rights of homeless people living on the street. Among other things, the working group created a know-your-rights booklet, which has been disseminated to thousands of people living in public spaces. Our *Streetlawyer program* provides free legal advice to homeless people on a square in Budapest's downtown (Blaha Lujza tér). With the help of our volunteer lawyers, we stand up against the abuses of power by the authorities and other institutions.

### b. *The precedents of Justice on the Streets*

The public space working group has for years been trying to document the ways on which street homeless people are disenfranchised. We paid special attention to cases of abuse in our *Streetlawyer program*, which has addressed the needs of hundreds of homeless people since 2010. Moreover, we appealed to street social workers to inform us about cases, where homeless people's rights had been infringed upon. Upon this call, we received a few dozen case descriptions from social workers and others. These cases illustrate not only that homeless people experience disenfranchisement but that they are not aware of their rights and the obligations of the authorities. Hence, homeless people are unable to enforce their rights and do not use available avenues of advocacy.

#### A case submitted by a street social worker

Four of our clients were living in a woody area in shacks and tents for two years. In March public space supervisors told them that they should leave in three weeks. They asked for a delay due to the heavy rainfall. I talked to the head of the public space supervisors who gave them two weeks and also asked our clients to pick up the garbage around their shacks. They moved out of the area on time but didn't tear down the shacks and tents. A few days later they saw that the shack was demolished and became uninhabitable and dangerous. The garbage had not been collected and no sanitation activities took place there ever since. The public space supervisors claimed to have no responsibility in this.

#### A case submitted by a citizen

It was Whit Monday when my daughter and I were going to a pilgrimage place to hold a workshop. We were waiting in front of the church where two homeless men were sitting on a bench. They were middle-aged and clean, waiting for some donations from people leaving the church. Then two district guards passed by. One of them left, while the other, a beefy fellow with an intimidating posture, suddenly turned back and sent the two homeless men away who were peacefully sitting and chatting on the bench. Then he walked away proudly and joined his colleague. The only thing we dared to do was make some loud remarks. It was the least we could do. This kind of behavior was even more offensive on a day like that.

The collection of these case descriptions reinforced our hypothesis that it was impossible to draw general conclusions from ad hoc stories about the frequency and nature of disenfranchisement affecting homeless people. We understood that in order to strengthen homeless people's advocacy,

thorough research should be conducted on their situation. As far as we know, no research had been conducted in Hungary about this topic before, so there are no reliable data that could be utilized. As a result, we decided to launch our own long-term research and examine the forms and the scale of discrimination affecting homeless people in Hungary.

### **c. Participatory action research**

Knowledge is power. As much as this statement is a commonplace, it has special significance in the lives of excluded and marginalized social groups such as homeless people. One of the primary objectives of *Justice on the Streets* was to create knowledge that will help solve homeless people's problems so that they can participate in policy debates as equal stakeholders.

Why research? In order to find applicable solutions to social problems, we should understand their nature. Although there is relatively much research about homelessness in Hungary, no one has studied either the discrimination that affects them, or the ability of homeless people to practice their rights. Participatory action research complements the traditional methods of the social sciences with new and creative approaches and pays attention to the researchers' own identity and experiences.

What is participation? Participatory action research challenges the dominant paradigm in social sciences about the relationship between the researchers and their subjects. Those directly affected by a social problem are in charge of the research. The *Justice on the Streets* research team is unique in that homeless activists have conducted all research activities from design to analysis. The personal experiences of homeless researchers provided them with a unique insight into social exclusion and discrimination.

The issue of objectivity may be raised here: are those who are directly affected by a phenomenon able to look at without bias? To a certain degree, every piece of research is subjective as the researchers' personal values and social background determine its topic, questions, hypotheses and the answers derived from the available data. In order to conduct a well-founded research, it is essential that researchers take into consideration as many aspects as possible and use the appropriate tools for data collection and analysis. This depends more on the researchers' preparedness than their involvement, which are just as important in participatory action research as in any other kind of research.

What is action? First of all, research is an action itself, as it activates people who have never been involved in advocacy before. During our training sessions, homeless people learnt about the social sciences. Moreover, it creates a very strong community when people with the same social background cooperate in order to achieve common goals. The participants' knowledge has grown, their self-image has improved and their self-confidence had been reinforced while conducting the research. These are extremely important personal developments for people experiencing homelessness.

Second, participatory action research is based on the idea that scientific research should not be produced for the bookshelf, but it should provide a solid basis for social change. Hence, based on the outcomes of *Justice on the Streets*, AVM will launch a campaign to stop discrimination against homeless people. This campaign will include press conferences, roundtable discussions and dialogue with uniformed officers, social workers and healthcare professionals. Moreover, a know-your-rights booklet will be developed to inform homeless people about the outcomes of the research.

#### d. Discrimination

The subject of our research is discrimination. Discrimination is the distinction made within a society whereby certain social groups or individuals are excluded from the formally equal political and economic community of citizens. The negative perception of homeless people is intensifying in contemporary Hungary, which is the basis for discrimination by both individuals and institutions.

In this research, we were primarily interested in state discrimination against street homeless people living in Budapest. We decided to focus on the state instead of individuals because in modern democracies the unity of the nation is symbolized by the state. In other words, the state is the social institution that should treat every citizen equally. While an individual is entitled to decide about whom they want to work or go out with, the state is not allowed to pick and choose among its citizens. If the state treats some of its citizens as second-class, it does not fulfill the role it has been assigned.

Fortunately our views are reinforced by a 2003 law about equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities, which states that „the Parliament [acknowledges] the right of person to live a life as a person of equal dignity, [and] in order to provide effective legal protection for those experiencing discrimination, [it proclaims] that the promotion of equal chances is primarily the responsibility of the state”. According to the *Equal Treatment Authority*<sup>1</sup> negative discrimination means that a person or a group is treated in a less beneficial way than a person or group in a comparable status because of a trait listed in the law on equal chances. The law lists the following **protected features** that can be the basis for discrimination: gender, race, skin color, nationality, belonging to a national or ethnic minority, mother tongue, disability, health status, religious or other convictions, political or other opinions, family status, motherhood or fatherhood, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social origin, financial status, nature of work, or belonging to an advocacy organization. In addition, other situation, feature or trait can also be the basis of discrimination. Even though homeless people can be the target of discrimination for a variety of reasons (e.g. age or the nature of work), in our research we have focused on **discrimination based on social and financial status**.

It is important to distinguish **direct and indirect discrimination**. Direct discrimination is when a specific individual or group experiences disadvantage because of a protected feature (for example, when someone is not hired because they are Roma). Indirect discrimination happens when a measure is seemingly neutral and applies to everyone, but place people with one of the above features in a disadvantage, and there is no rational reason for it. In *Justice on the Streets*, we looked at both direct and indirect discrimination

The original starting point of our research was that discrimination affecting homeless people does not have to be examined from the point of view of legislation, as pro forma there is equality in Hungary. We identified practices of law enforcement and advocacy as our focal point. Based on our own experiences, most homeless people – similar to other excluded groups – are unable to enforce their pro forma rights. Besides, as both the General Assembly of Budapest and the Hungarian Parliament introduced a new law that made “residing in public space” an offence in 2011, thus making homelessness illegal, we also decided to study the consequences of the new law.

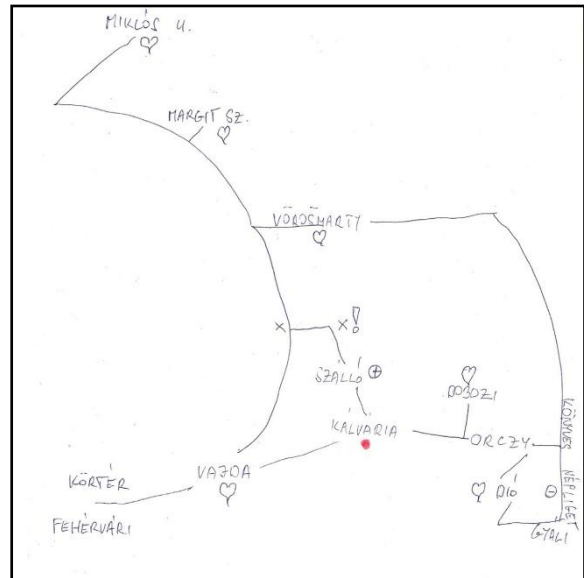
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<sup>1</sup> Source: Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság [http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu/jogszabalyok/ebh\\_about](http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu/jogszabalyok/ebh_about)

## e. The research team

The requirement to be a member of the *Justice on the Streets* research team was to have had a personal experience of (street) homelessness. After several months of recruitment, the research team was formed in October 2011 and originally consisted of 20 people. By the end of the study in 2012, the number of homeless researchers was eleven, who had mostly been part of the project from the beginning. The team also included two activists, who had no personal experience of homelessness, but have training in the social sciences (social work and anthropology) which was very useful for team's work.

We launched the project with four days of intensive training, where we learnt about participatory action research with the help of international examples, as well as about quantitative and qualitative approaches.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the training, we created mental maps<sup>3</sup> of the homeless researchers' relationship to public spaces, and we also practiced interviewing, filling in questionnaires and conducting focus groups. Using drama techniques, we analyzed various forms of harassment by the authorities, created an ethical code for the team as well as an action plan. After the intensive training, the research team met for 3 hours every week and spent the intervening time collecting data; conducting interviews and surveys. Towards the end of the study, the research team held several one-day meetings to process the large amounts of data we had collected. Besides research meetings, we organized some leisure activities (such as a picnic) and the members of the research team regularly participate in events organized by *The City is for All*.



**A homeless researcher's mental map of a day's activities**

<sup>1</sup> Qualitative method refers to the collection of “stories”, and it is appropriate for studying people's everyday experiences, whereas the quantitative methods are good for collecting statistical data which allow for general conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> A mental map is the physical imprint of an individual's use of space, as well as his or her notions of space, which is most often created by drawing.



### III. Methodology

#### a. The primary question and sub-questions

Once the team was on same wavelength in terms of knowledge and the terms of collaboration, we worked out the methodology. Our first task was defining the questions we wanted to get answers to. We settled on the following as the primary question of the study: **“Are street homeless people in Budapest discriminated against by representatives of the state, and if yes, how often and in what ways?”**

In everyday language, the term “homeless” refers to people residing in public spaces. In reality, homelessness is a much broader term. It refers to the tens of thousands of people who live in some kind of institution (e.g. temporary shelters) and several hundred thousand people who face eviction due to unpaid bills and mortgage arrears. Housing poverty affects millions of Hungarians, including people who cannot afford to heat their homes properly, live in over-crowded homes, or have uncertain legal status.

In our research we focused specifically on the experiences of street homeless people. In the category “street homeless” we included people who spend the night in one-night shelters or under worse circumstances such as public spaces or places not meant for human habitation (e.g. cellars, caves, abandoned buildings), or self-made tents or shacks. Even though one-night shelters do not necessarily mean sleeping on the street, there are no guaranteed places and people often have to spend their night on the street. In addition, given that one-night shelters only operate from the evening until the next morning their residents often spend the day on the street or in drop-in centers. The number of homeless people who fall in the target group of this study is at least 5000, 2000 of whom spend the night in shelters and at least 3000 on the street, in shacks or places not meant for human habitation.

For the purposes of this research we considered “representatives of the state” all civil servants, or those who receive their salary from the state or local government. For their role in public transportation, we included the ticket inspectors of the Budapest Public Transportation Company (BKV) in this group as well.

We organized the sub-questions in the following categories:

#### 1. How does discrimination take place?

- What image do citizens and state representatives have of homeless people?
- In what areas do homeless people experience the most discrimination?
- By whom are homeless people discriminated against?

#### 2. Areas of discrimination

- How do the media portray homeless people?
- Do homeless people experience discrimination by healthcare professionals?
- Do homeless people experience discrimination in government offices?<sup>4</sup>
- Do homeless people experience discrimination by the authorities?<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> We included in this all official locations where homeless people come into contact with the state or local councils, e.g. job centers and offices to obtain government issued documents.

<sup>5</sup> By this we primarily mean police officers and public space supervisors, but the people interviewed occasionally mentioned city or district guards, even though they have no legal authority to enforce laws.

- Do homeless people experience discrimination by public service providers?
- Do homeless people experience discrimination by the justice system?
- Do homeless people experience discrimination by employers?
- Do homeless people experience discrimination in education?
- What national and local laws punish street homeless people?

### 3. What is the state doing to prevent discrimination?

- How is the state protecting the rights of homeless people?

## **b. Data gathering methodology**

### *i. Personal experiences*

The first-hand experiences and insight of the researchers added value, not hindrance to our participatory action research. Therefore during the meetings of *Justice on the Streets* we often discussed the researchers' personal experiences of discrimination, which we used in our analysis.

### *ii. Questionnaires*

In order to find out what homeless people think of discrimination that affects them, in what situations and under what circumstance they have experienced discrimination, we chose a method often used in sociology: a quantitative survey. The 40 questions of the questionnaire were devised by the research team, which can be grouped in the following categories:

- General, descriptive questions (e.g. When were you born? Since when are you homeless? What is the source of your income?)
- The image held of homeless people: what signs and characteristics does the wider public associate with homeless people
- General opinion about the discrimination homeless people have to face
- First-hand experiences: in what situations, under what circumstances and by whom have you experienced discrimination?
- The behavior and discrimination exhibited by uniformed authorities
- General experience and opinions on advocacy



*Justice on the Streets survey*

We completed the survey between March and June 2012. The selection of people to be interviewed was random: we selected locations around the city (trying to cover as many districts as possible) at which to complete the questionnaires. We started with drop-in centers, because we knew many people in our target group spend a significant amount of time in these places, and then we moved on to public spaces. We picked locations where typically a great number of homeless people can be found (e.g. soup kitchens), and sometimes we would randomly stop them on the street.

Questionnaires were always filled in by the researchers, while reading out the questions one by one to the respondent. To preserve the anonymity of our subjects, we asked for no data that can be used for personal identification. To avoid including a respondent twice, we used their date of birth and initials.

In order to be able to draw meaningful conclusions from the answers, we originally intended to complete and process one thousand questionnaires. However, this proved to be beyond our capacity, and so 400<sup>6</sup> questionnaires were completed and processed in the study. To find out whether our data set was representative of the entire homeless population of Budapest, we compared the distribution of age and gender in our data set with similar data collected during the annual February 3 survey of 2012<sup>7</sup> (see Table 1). In terms of age, we split the data to respondents below and above 40 and we also looked at the gender ratio. The differences between the two data sets can be considered negligible, therefore **the survey can be considered quasi-representative, hence appropriate to draw general conclusions regarding our target group.**

**Table 1 – The gender and age distribution of subjects in the February 3, 2012 survey and the *Justice on the Streets* survey expressed as a percentage, N<sup>8</sup>**

	February 3, 2012		<i>Justice on the Streets</i>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Age 18-39</b>	15%	6%	14%	5%
<b>Age 40+</b>	59%	21%	63%	17%
<b>Total N<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>741</b>		<b>359</b>	

While conducting the survey we faced the following challenges, partly due to our inexperience:

- a. Some of the questions were not well worded, therefore we did not get clear enough answers – we had to exclude these from the final analysis.
- b. We didn't manage to cover the whole city as we skipped many of the outer districts.
- c. It was at times difficult to convince homeless people to participate. Even though the surveys were conducted by people experiencing homelessness, self-defense made many homeless people suspicious, especially towards people carrying questionnaires. Although in the course of the study we gained a lot of experience and confidence in approaching our subjects, we were still at times refused.

### **iii. Interviews**

The objective of the interviews was to add qualitative data to the results of our survey, that is, to complement the statistical data with real stories. The interviews were conducted with people from diverse social backgrounds, who all come in contact with homeless people in the course of their work. We asked the interviewees whether they ever witnessed discrimination against homeless people, and if yes, in what forms. The target groups of our interviews were *social workers, police officers, ticket inspectors on public transportation, healthcare professionals, public space supervisors, social service providers and politicians.*

We devised the interview questions together, and revised them after a few interviews had been conducted. In these semi-structured conversations we tried make the interviewee talk as much as possible. The majority of interviews were digitally recorded and a word-for-word transcript was produced. When this was not possible, detailed notes were prepared. One interviewee responded in

<sup>6</sup> Considering that polling agencies regularly use samples of a few thousand to reflect the opinions of the entire population of Hungary, 400 subjects is an appropriate sample to gauge the opinion of the 5000 roofless people living in Budapest.

<sup>7</sup> Since 1999, every February 3 – the mean coldest day of the year – a survey is conducted, which provides long-term comparable data about the health and social situation of homeless people. An overview of the 2012 results can be downloaded from here: [bmszki.hu/file/f3/2012/F-3-2012-sajto.ppt](https://bmszki.hu/file/f3/2012/F-3-2012-sajto.ppt)

<sup>8</sup> Due to rounding the results, there can be +/-1% difference in the results

<sup>9</sup> N represents the sample size, which is the number of answer/subjects.

writing. We provided anonymity to all of our interviewees, except for those whose positions make it impossible. The interviews were always conducted by two researchers, who took turns asking questions.

Our original objective to interview three representatives of each target group was only partially successful. Representatives of certain groups were reluctant to come forward (e.g. ticket inspectors and police officers), which is probably due to their organizational hierarchy and rules regarding external communication. Interviews lasted between a half and one and a half hours, and took place in a location selected by the interviewee. We conducted 18 interviews with the following people:

- Three social workers
- Three civil servants: one working in an office specifically for homeless customers, one who used to work in a similar office, and one working in the housing department of a local municipality
- Three public space supervisors, two in Buda and one in Pest
- One police officer
- Three healthcare professionals: one EMT, one director of a homeless medical center, and one dentist
- Two public transportation workers: one current and an ex-ticket inspector
- Three politicians: the mayor<sup>10</sup> of Budapest, one MP in the Budapest general assembly, previously who used to be responsible for homeless affairs and one district mayor who also used to be his party's referent for homeless affairs

#### *iv. Secondary data*

We requested information from district police stations, the Budapest Police Headquarters (BRFK), the Independent Police Complaints Body (FRPT), public space supervising offices as well as from the Center for Public Transport for Budapest (BKK) regarding any complaints they have received by homeless people. We made freedom of information request to the National Police Headquarters for their statistics about the encounters of police officers with homeless people.

#### **c. Data processing and analysis**

Of the 40 original questions of the survey, we selected about 20 as fit for the final analysis. The rest of the questions proved to result in vague, uncertain or meaningless answers. The data attained from the survey was processed by an expert, a volunteer with a degree in sociology, using SPSS software.

The processing of the interviews took place in a group. We read all the interviews, highlighted the sections that referred to discrimination, printed the highlighted texts and categorized and analyzed them according to their content.



**Content analysis**

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<sup>10</sup> The publicly available version of the interview conducted with the mayor are accessible on the Internet at [http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/09/22/nekem\\_no\\_az\\_dolgom\\_hogy\\_a\\_hajlektalanoknak\\_lakast\\_adjak\\_interju\\_tarlos\\_istvan\\_fopolgarmesterrel](http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/09/22/nekem_no_az_dolgom_hogy_a_hajlektalanoknak_lakast_adjak_interju_tarlos_istvan_fopolgarmesterrel) and [http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/09/22/egyelore\\_no\\_engedem\\_hogy\\_bantsak\\_oket\\_interju\\_tarlos\\_istvan\\_fopolgar\\_mesterrel\\_2\\_resz](http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/09/22/egyelore_no_engedem_hogy_bantsak_oket_interju_tarlos_istvan_fopolgar_mesterrel_2_resz)

## IV. Results of the research

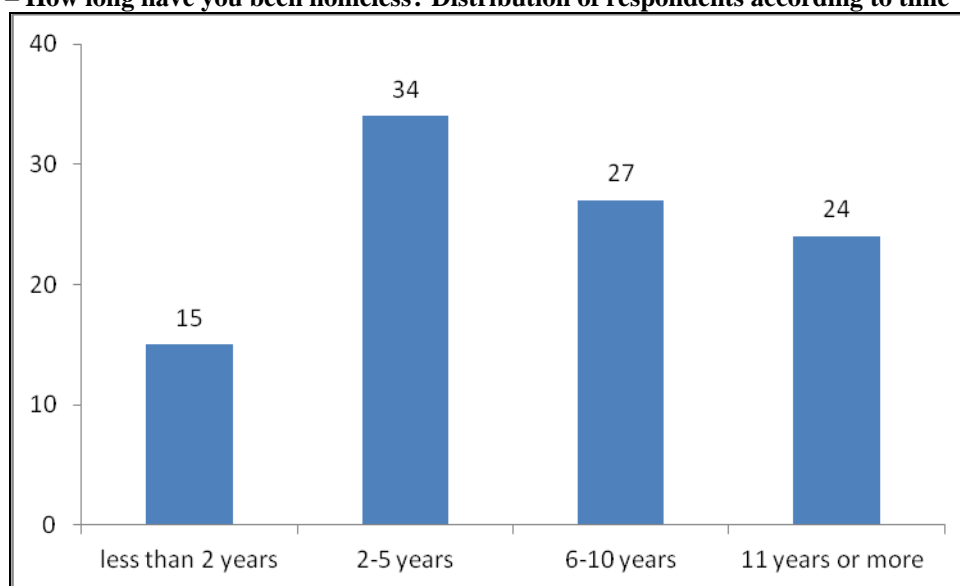
### 1. LIVING CONDITIONS

The first part of the questionnaire asked questions about the living conditions of our respondents regarding the length of time they have spent living on the street, their residence/sleeping site, and sources of income.

#### a. Residence/sleeping site

On average, the respondents have been homeless for 7 years.<sup>11</sup> Half of the respondents have been living on the streets for less than 5 years, but 24% have been homeless for more than 10 years (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – How long have you been homeless? Distribution of respondents according to time % (N=346)



Other comprehensive studies have also shown that a significant number of homeless people have been in this situation for a long time. In a survey completed on February 3, 2007 37% of respondents said to have been homeless for more than ten years. The reason for this is that the resources (e.g. housing benefits, affordable social housing) that can prevent homelessness or help homeless people off the streets and into homes again are almost completely missing in Hungary. This raises the question of whether current social services help people get out of homelessness or conserve the status quo.

*“In my life I have met only one person, who escaped homelessness and sorted out his life. That was a triumph for me.” (social worker)*

**Slightly more than half of homeless people indicated one night shelters as their residence and one fifth of our respondents sleep on the street. 29% of respondents live in abandoned buildings, shacks, tents and other non-residential places (Table 2).**

<sup>11</sup> Average 7.17; st.dev.: 5,8; N=346

**Table 2 – Where do you currently live/sleep? N, %**

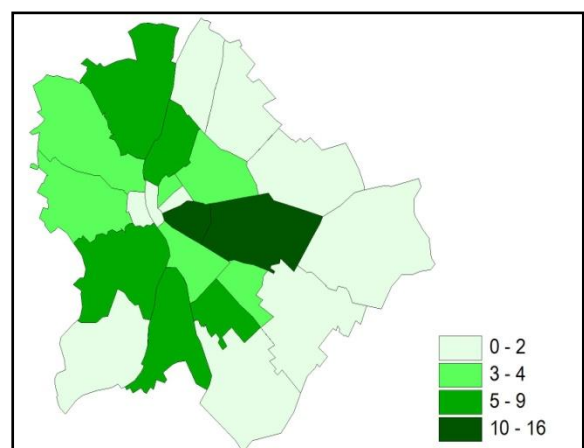
	N	%
one-night shelter	185	52
street	66	18
abandoned building	28	8
shack	30	8
tent	23	6
other	26	7
total	358	100

**In terms of geographic location, most respondents reported to live in Districts VIII and X and outer districts of East Budapest, the Castle District, and Districts V and VII were reported the least often (Figure 2).**

Although our survey is not representative in terms of geographic spread<sup>12</sup>, it is useful for drawing some conclusions. The geographic spread of sleeping locations is largely influenced by the location of social services for homeless people and the policies of the local municipalities regarding public places.

Most social services for homeless people can be found in Districts VIII and X. District VIII has more than 1000 beds in temporary and one night shelters, while District X has 633 beds. District II has no social service institutions for homeless people at all, and apart from some outer districts the least beds can be found in District I (35 beds), District III (50 beds), District V (64 beds) and District VII (70 beds).<sup>13</sup> These numbers are generally reflected by our map. Most respondents sleep in Districts VIII and X, and fewer in Districts I, V and VII. Although North Buda has very few shelter beds, the higher number of respondents who sleep there is probably due to the forests, where many people live in self-built shacks.

**Figure 2. – Where do you currently live/sleep? The proportion of responses by districts %**



The lenience of local authorities also plays a role in “choosing” a place of residence. In the case of the Castle District, for example we know from personal experience and from the media that the local government wants to push homeless people out of the areas frequented by tourists.

*“In the last three months almost 100 homeless people have been taken to the police station for various infractions or crimes. 31 people have received fines for ‘residing in public spaces’ up to a total value of 1.6 million HUF (more than 700 USD). In case the person cannot pay, the fine is commuted to community service.” (Várnegyed, September 14, 2012, p. 5)*

<sup>12</sup> We cannot say with absolute certainty where homeless people live because they change their locations very often.

<sup>13</sup> The data was assembled by Péter Györi in April, 2011, based on the database of the National Rehabilitation and Social Services Authority.



Similar tendencies can be observed in inner city districts such as District V, VI and VII.

*“I heard that police officers send them over to another district, they can rummage in the bins there, but not here.”* (social worker)

*“We tell them once, we tell them twice, and usually they leave by the third time.”* (public space supervisor)

A public space supervisor mentioned the use of street furniture such as dividing arm rests on benches as an instrument for pushing homeless people out. In the district of the interviewee they had just installed such dividers on benches near a market to keep away the homeless people who tend to “occupy” them. This is a common practice: not only local governments, but private citizens and businesses will also install spikes, fences and dividers on benches, curbs or any other spot that can serve as a shelter to homeless people.



**Anti-sit furniture in Budapest**

**b. Income**

**30% of respondents have income from some sort of recycling activity<sup>14</sup>, 18% of them mentioned work<sup>15</sup> as a source of income. 15% of respondents have no income at all (Table 3).**

**Table 3 – What is the source of your income? % mentioned (N=364)**

	%
Recycling	30
Work	18
Benefits	18
Nothing	15
Pension	11
Begging	9
Selling street newspaper	6
Other	4

It is important to note that a lot of activities that are necessary for daily survival force homeless people to commit infractions. Although the Constitutional Court ruled at the end of 2011 that a law prohibiting rummaging in bins is unconstitutional, dozens of district governments had such laws. According to information requested by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, in 2011 in District VIII alone 184 cases of rummaging were persecuted. In most cases the “offenders” were let go with a warning and in 11 cases fines were set between 5 and 25 thousand HUF (22 to 115 USD). Although silent begging is not against the law in Hungary, many district governments restrict the activity in certain places and time periods. Vendors of the street newspaper called *Fedél Nélkül* (Without a Roof) are often accused of begging or traffic violations, while recycling often incurs a public health violation fine. The new code of infractions labels certain activities that are typically vital for the

<sup>14</sup> A wide range of activities are included in recycling such as collecting paper, bottles, metal as well as selling found objects.

<sup>15</sup> We included both official and informal employment.

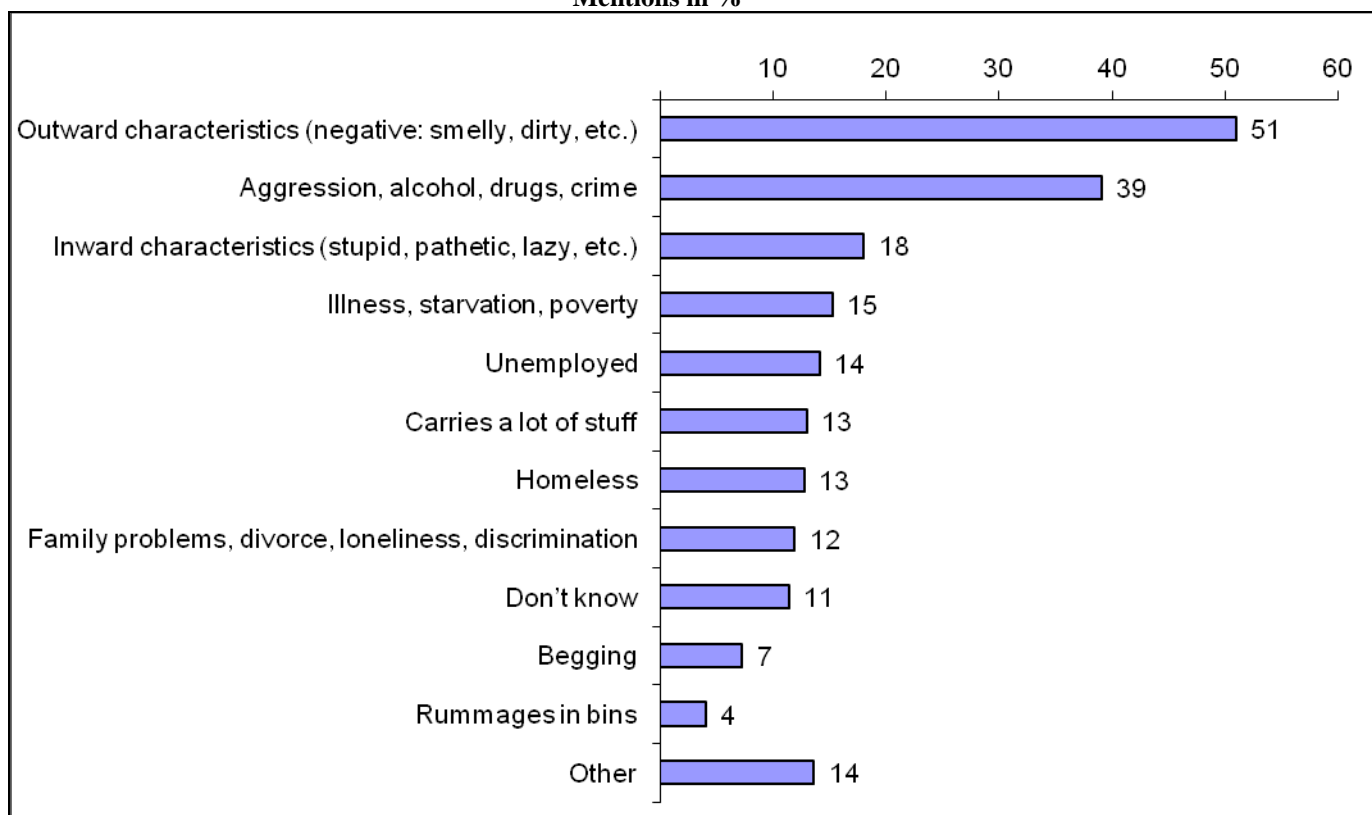
survival of homeless people as so antisocial that they can incur a prison sentence. Therefore the law equates homeless people with petty criminals, which leads to direct and indirect discrimination against them and the criminalization of poverty.

## 2. STEREOTYPES ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

In our questionnaire, we asked what homeless people thought about the way society thinks about them.

**Half of the respondents said that people associate external and negative characteristics and almost 40% some sort of deviant activity with homelessness. Almost 20% mentioned inner characteristics (Figure 3).**

**Figure 3 – What are three things that you think come to people’s minds when they of the word „homeless“? Mentions in %**



Overall it can be concluded that homeless people think that they have a very bad reputation in the wider society and attract a lot of negative stereotypes. This skewed image not only defines their relationship to society, but also has a negative effect on their self-respect and their relationships to each other.

*“Homeless people are discriminated against even by other homeless.” (homeless respondent)*



Although we couldn't find a survey that studies whether non-homeless people really think this way about homeless people, a 2005 study<sup>16</sup> showed that of the groups featured in the survey<sup>17</sup>, homeless people were thought to be in the worst situation. In the 2005 survey, mainstream attitudes towards homelessness are similar to those identified by our homeless respondents, e.g. social exclusion, alcoholism, and unemployment.

The interviews with professionals who work with homeless people also reinforced **the most common stereotypes** identified by homeless people themselves.

*„Many people think that bums are dirty and stinky. If they take public transportation, I may catch a disease.” (social worker)*

*“Guests came to our office [where we work with homeless clients] and I offered them a coffee or a drink from the fridge. They were like “No, no!” Like you couldn't touch anything here, as if we had the plague. (civil servant)*

*“Homeless people have opportunities to clean themselves but a lot of them don't do it. I find it reprehensible that they spend the little money they have on alcohol and get drunk.” (public transport worker)*

*“I cannot accept their aggressive behavior and that they urinate and defecate all over public spaces. If people voice criticism based on these facts I do not see it as negative discrimination.” (mayor of Budapest)*

*“Out of 100 homeless who are travelling on public transport two will be on official business. The other 98 are begging.” (public space supervisor)*

**For the development of these stereotypes**, most respondents blamed a small group of homeless people who are well visible and break dominant norms.

*“When people think of the word homeless, they immediately think of bums. And that they panhandle aggressively and pee all over the place. This is because of the 15%. 85% would need a totally different treatment.” (public space supervisor)*

*“People always identify the group with a few deviants. When my daughter went to school camp they told her that the homeless stole her lunch. If she hears it a lot, she will start believing it.” (Budapest assembly member)*

*“I don't think this is ethical and honest. You want housing benefits and free housing for homeless people when other honest working people are waiting for social housing?” (mayor of Budapest)*

<sup>16</sup> Studio Metropolitana – Double Decker (2005). Hajléktalanok Budapesten – kutatási jelentés. <http://osszefogaskozalap.hu/files/Hajlektalanok%20Budapesten.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> The questionnaire included the following groups: entrepreneurs, youth, employees, large families, pensioners, the disabled, the seriously ill, the unemployed and the homeless.

*“Unfortunately there a lot of people in this community whose appearance doesn’t make me want to look after them. They shouldn’t wait until grass is growing between their toes. The other ten can find the public baths, but a lot of them won’t even try because it’s more comfortable like this. (healthcare professional)*

A common approach instead of looking for the social causes of homelessness is to blame the individuals and assume that homelessness is a chosen lifestyle.

*“There is a relatively small percentage who ended up on the streets out of no fault of their own.” (healthcare professional)*

*“Living in public spaces as a lifestyle is a chosen behavior. We have a national network of social service institutions for homeless people, so it is a choice whether to live on a bench or not.” (district mayor)*

*“I have heard of the full-time homeless, who have a home but decide to live a rootless existence.” (police officer)*

*“He tried to live a normal life under the circumstances. Unfortunately that is the minority of homeless people.” (healthcare professional)*

*“There are a lot of shelters in the district where they get a room, they have a key, but they don’t want it. They are in public spaces instead. They litter, they don’t go to lung X-rays. They are shutting themselves out of society. There are the empty rooms and flats, but they don’t want them.” (public space supervisor)*

*“I have to check the IDs of those people who are more likely to commit crimes. This naturally includes homeless people, certain social groups, potentially criminal groups, if we have information about them. Those are the people we are going to ID.” (police officer)*

The majority of interviewees don’t believe that politicians and decision makers are more prejudiced than other members of society, but that **their political interests command that they reinforce the prejudices of the majority rather than dispelling them.**

*“They want to comply with social prejudices. If the social prejudice was that we love homeless people, the politicians would immediately love them too.” (civil servant)*

*“There is solidarity and a lot of sympathy. The trouble is when there is something at stake. Who should get the social apartment, a homeless person or my grandson? And this is the prejudice that should be changed, so they understand that they are not taking it away from the grandson.” (civil servant)*

*“Anyone can end up in any kind of situation. We shouldn’t judge other people without knowing them. A stigmatizing, labeling statement can hurt, too. Politicians should be role models and not say things like that.” (Budapest assembly member)*

*“The reason why they don’t have awesome programs for homeless people is that it cannot appear in the news that the mayor is supporting a program that helps homeless people. These two words, mayor and homeless cannot be in the same sentence in any context, neither negative nor positive. He wants to meet social expectations.” (civil servant)*

### 3. DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Most of the questionnaire inquired about discrimination against homeless people. After collecting general impressions, researchers asked questions regarding personal experiences of discriminatory treatment.

#### a. Discrimination against homeless people in general

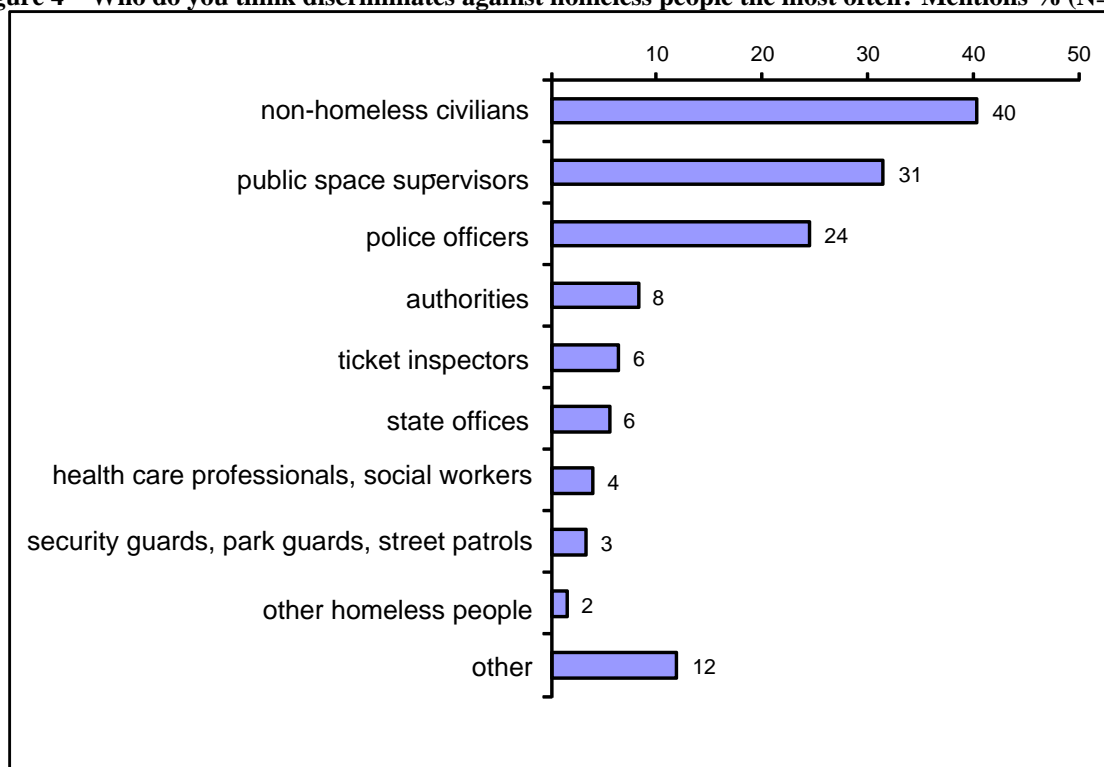
**83% of the respondents think that homeless people are discriminated against, and 17% could not answer the question. 37% of those who said “yes” think that homeless people are *very often*, and almost half of them think that they are *often* exposed to discrimination (Table 4).**

**Table 4– How often do you think homeless people experience discrimination? N, %**

	N	%
very rarely	9	3
rarely	21	6
often	161	48
very often	124	37
does not know	18	5
Total	333	100

**To the open-ended question “who discriminates against homeless people?”, most respondents mentioned non-homeless civilians (e.g. passers-by, youth, fellow passengers) first, and public space supervisors and police officers second. (Figure 4).**

**Figure 4 – Who do you think discriminates against homeless people the most often? Mentions % (N=327)**



The astonishing fact is that **57% of respondents have been treated in a humiliating manner**, and there seems to be **no significant difference between the two genders in this respect**.

**Most of the respondents (37%) named public space supervisors, and almost 25% named police officers and non-homeless civilians as those who have treated them in a humiliating way. Ticket inspectors were named by 14% of the respondents (Table 5).**

Gender differences proved to be significant in three cases: men mentioned police officers, security guards and park guards in a significantly higher proportion, while women mentioned people in the “other” category almost twice as often.

**Table 5 – Who has treated you in a humiliating manner? Mentions % (N=216)<sup>18</sup>**

	Male	Female	Total
public space supervisor	36	41	37
non-homeless civilians	27	22	25
police officers	27	15	24
ticket inspectors	14	17	14
health care professionals, social workers	6	7	6
authorities	7	2	6
security guards, park guards	6	0	4
other homeless people	2	4	2
other	18	30	21
N	162	54	216

<sup>18</sup> significance: police officers – 0.079; security guards, park guards – 0.077; other – 0.066

*“We had a patient who was brought in because he was lying in an underpass – he was asleep – and then a security guard went up to him and poured hot water on him.” (health care professional)*

**b. Personal experiences of discrimination**

In the first round, 64% mentioned personal experiences related to discrimination. However, when asked about certain locations or cases of discrimination, an additional 11% of respondents turned out to have had such experiences.

**In total, 75% of the respondents have experienced discrimination because of being homeless.**

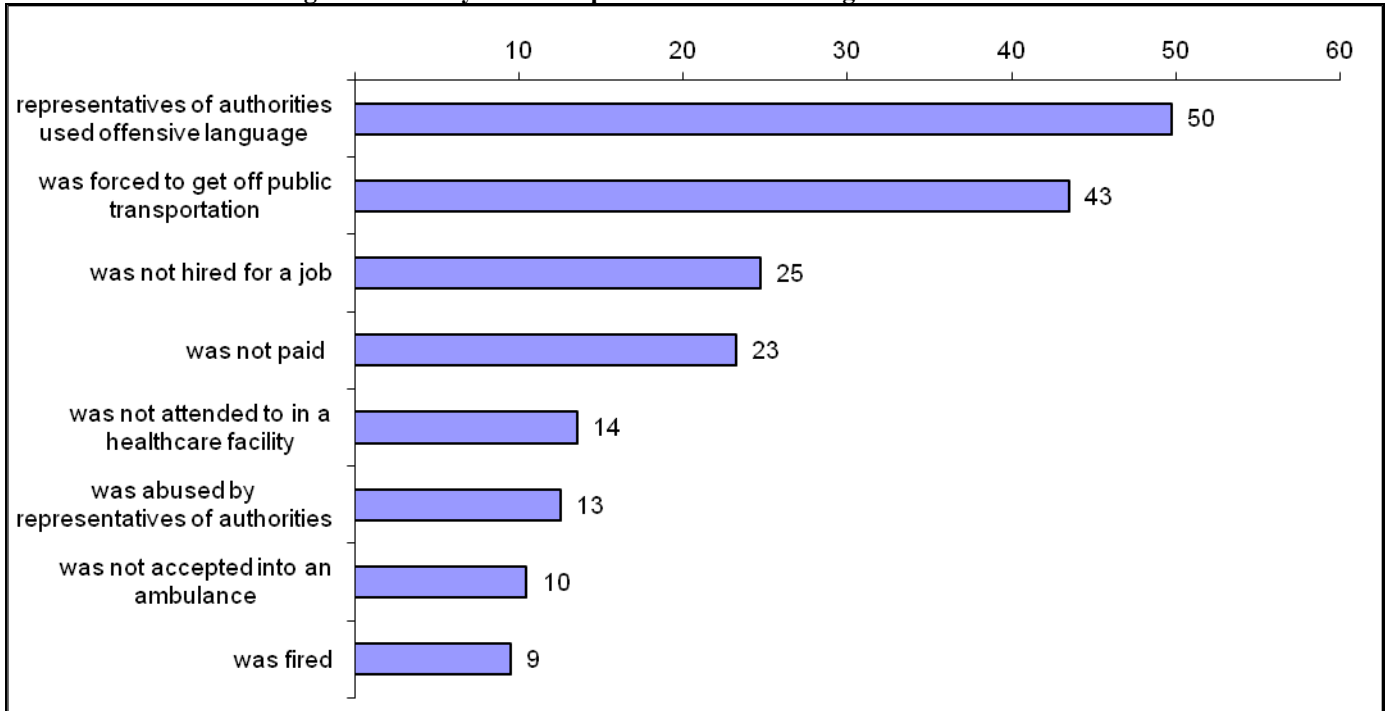
When identifying the areas of discrimination, we obtained the proportions indicated in Table 6.

**Table 6 – Since you are homeless, have you experienced discrimination...? Yes %, N**

	Total N	%
on public transportation	359	51
by authorities	355	48
in social institutions	355	25
in healthcare facilities	350	25
in state offices	350	22
in the justice system	355	10
at work	354	7
in education	358	3

In our questionnaire we specifically asked about typical situations of discrimination which had previously been identified by the members of the research group, mostly by personal experience. These include for example offensive language, discrimination at work and in health care facilities and physical abuse. Figure 5 summarizes these answers.

**Figure 5– Have you ever experienced the following... Mentions %**



***i. Public transportation***

**Homeless people most often experienced discrimination on public transportation (Table 6). 43% of the respondents have been forced to get off vehicles because of being homeless (Table 5).**

It is not evident how to interpret discrimination experienced on public transportation. Conversations related to the survey revealed that several respondents regarded being forced to get off a vehicle for any reason as a form of discrimination. However, according to the terms and conditions of the Budapest Transportation Authority, any person without a valid ticket can be excluded from traveling. Therefore, if someone is forced to get off because they do not have a ticket, it does not qualify as discrimination in itself, even if the person happens to be homeless. Nonetheless, from the point of view of the respondent, the lack of tickets – along with the fact that they do not have a place to stay – is a result of poverty. Thus, it is not the exclusion from traveling which qualifies as (indirect) discrimination, but the fact that because of high prices and the lack of sufficient income, homeless people cannot use public transportation and so it is difficult for them to satisfy even their most basic needs. This issue exceeds the scope of discrimination and raises serious questions regarding social inequality and access to public services.

The terms and conditions of using the services of the Budapest Transportation Authority include some provisions regarding the circumstances of travel, such as the size of luggage that can be carried. People with homes frequently use their own or their friends’ cars to transport big parcels. For homeless people, however, who find it difficult to even store their personal belongings, it is not easy to observe this rule.

*“I was forced to get off when the sacks in which I carry the bottles were bigger than allowed.” (homeless respondent)*

It raises much more difficult questions when a homeless person is forced to get off because their clothes are dirty or because they smell. What are the limits of tolerance? What is the extent of homeless people's and their fellow passengers' right to travel?

*"I was made to get off a couple of times when I smelled. I can understand them."*  
(homeless respondent)

In any case, there are several examples of people being harassed on public transportation simply because of their being homeless, and this often has nothing to do with whether or not they have valid tickets.

*"A kind person buys me a pass every month, so I never have any problems on public transportation. But there is a driver on the line I use who never lets me get on. If I am the only one sitting in the bus stop, he does not even stop."* (homeless respondent)

Undue harassment can be clearly demonstrated by the following example:

*"I got on tram 37 at Élessarok. I got on although I did not have a ticket, and after five or six stops, nobody else seemed to be interested in validating their tickets. We were at the MÁV 10 gate, when an old man got on the tram. The driver then announced in the loudspeaker: "The bum should get off. The bum should get off or else the tram will not move." The man by the door did not even realize that it was meant for him. He got off only upon the next warning."*

## *ii. Healthcare*

**One quarter of the respondents experienced discrimination in social and healthcare facilities (Table 6). 14% of the respondents were not attended to in a healthcare facility, and 10% were not taken by the ambulance when it would have been necessary (Figure 5).**

Although these proportions are high enough already, our conversations revealed that respondents did not always want to tell about their bad experiences in social institutions. Despite the anonymity of the questionnaires, they were afraid of possible disadvantages. It is important to highlight that homeless people mentioned several good experiences as well, especially when doctors and nurses made extra efforts in order for them to receive appropriate treatment.

When we asked the head of a healthcare facility for the homeless about the possible consequences if a patient turns out to be homeless, she said:

*"It can be both good or bad. There are people who are really sweet patients and nurses love them and when they find out they are homeless they give them all the left-over food or they find them nice pajamas. ('Just take them, they will come in handy.') But it happens the other way around, too, when there is negative discrimination."*

In several areas of healthcare, homeless people are discriminated against because of their poverty.

*“In areas where medication or medical therapeutic devices cost such an astronomical amount that a homeless person is unlikely to be able to afford them, doctors will not even start any kind of treatment, because they know there is no way. Definitely, there is discrimination here, which is, again, not against the homeless person, but about the penniless one, even if the person has a home but can’t afford to buy these things... In dental treatment, there are many things you have to pay for. A dentist will not even start, because it’s pointless.” (healthcare professional)*

The uneven experiences of homeless people were partly confirmed by a research<sup>19</sup> conducted in 2003 on the attitude of healthcare professionals towards homeless people. An important result is that 93.8% of healthcare professionals rejected the assertion that socially underprivileged people “do not deserve” healthcare services.

*“If I get a homeless person I always do what needs to be done. In this regard, there is no discrimination, although you are kind of reluctant to deal with such patients.” (healthcare professional)*

However, 30.5% of paramedics and nurses did not agree with the statement that they are obliged to attend to homeless people, and 25.5% agreed only partly. 27.7% of nurses did not agree or agreed only partly with the statement that homeless people have the same rights as themselves. Only 57.3% of all respondents agreed fully with the statement that they give the same treatment to homeless people as their other patients. 42.7% think that homeless people do not receive treatment of the same quality as other patients.

*“Nobody likes to deal with them. I don’t know what other diseases they might have, maybe something they are not even aware of. Now that the number of TB cases has gone up, you are afraid of them. They are untidy, they smell – really, look at their mouths –, I mean, they are scruffy.” (healthcare professional)*

The 2003 research also pointed out the differences between professionals working in various fields of healthcare. It turned out that paramedics – working on the “frontline” of healthcare services – are somewhat less supportive of attending to homeless people than their colleagues working in hospitals. Our own research also revealed that from homeless people’s point of view, emergency transportation is an especially sensitive issue. According to our survey, it has happened to 10% of the respondents that the ambulance did not take them when it would have been necessary. Besides emergency services, several people complained about medical transportation as well.

*“This is a kind of shortage economy. Paramedics work for a terribly low salary, they are way overstrained. They also take the path of least resistance. Maybe they had a fight with at home, and who are they going to pick at? The homeless, because they don’t fight back. We’re only human, and of course, we do encounter these things.” (healthcare professional)*

*“It has happened several times that they left them out on the street, even in a wheelchair. Or they leaned the man against the curb for me to do whatever I will with him.” (social worker)*

<sup>19</sup> dr. Zrínyi Miklós, Balogh Zoltán (2003): Ami az alanyi jogból megmarad - Az egészségügyi dolgozók viszonyulása a hajléktalanok ellátásához. *LAM* 13(4): 344-347. <http://www.lam.hu/folyoiratok/lam/0304/19.htm>



*“With medical transportation, it happens that they claim on the paper that the person has been released to his/her home, but instead of leaving them somewhere they simply let them go on the street.” (healthcare professional)*

*“We called the ambulance for a homeless client. It arrived 25 minutes later. I could tell that the paramedics were tired, they were burned out, there are a lot of patients in the wintertime – well, they did not treat the person the way they were supposed to. I had to grab him and put him on the stretcher, because the paramedic was going to shove him on there like a bag of potatoes. He said his shift was spent collecting God knows how many people from the street.” (social worker)*

When we asked how it is possible that a homeless person does not get proper treatment at a healthcare facility we received the following answer:

*“There are several possibilities. One version is when patients are not admitted to the hospital although they were sent there. At the hospital, they claim that the patient decided to leave. Very often this is not true. In some cases not only were the people unable to leave on their own, but it was difficult for them even with help, so I’m sure they were made to leave. It happens. Not very often, but 2 or 3 cases get reported to me each year for sure. Also, sometimes they treat people in a way that will make them want to leave.” (healthcare professional)*

### **iii. Labor market**

Although labor is typically not in the public sector, the majority of the stereotypes attached to homeless people are related to unemployment and homeless people also mention discrimination in the field of employment a lot.

**One quarter of the respondents have been denied work or were not paid for a job. 9% were fired because of being homeless (Figure 5).**

Many respondents mentioned that on several occasions, the only reason why they were not fired because of their homelessness was because they did not reveal it. It also happened that when the employer found out that the person was homeless, he fired him right away.

*“Employers are really scared of the homeless. That they will steal, that they are not clean. They are afraid that the person will not show up, that they will disappear.” (civil servant)*

*“I’m also mad about the things they do to not only homeless people but also to people with homes. Three days probation, and then you can go to hell with no money at all. I can’t believe how unfair this is. With homeless clients it happens all the time. They are even more defenseless. There is no one to stick up for them.” (civil servant)*

### **iv. The demolition of shacks**

**37% of the respondents have lived in tents or self-made shacks. A little more than half of these respondents said they had been threatened with the demolition of their dwelling. In 31% of the cases the shacks were actually torn down (Table 7).**

**Table 7 – Experiences related to living in a tent or a shack Yes %, N**

	Total N	%
Have you ever had to live in a tent or self-made shack?	347	37
Have you ever been threatened with the demolition of your tent or shack?	127	54
Has your a tent or shack been actually destroyed?	128	31

In 2011 and 2012, *The City is For All* was informed several times about the intention of local authorities to demolish self-made shacks without any kind of official procedure. Although, as stated several times by the *Commissioner for Fundamental Rights*, even in the case of shacks built without permission, local governments must conduct some kind of official procedure in order to remove them. Such a procedure is important not only for because in this way shack-dwellers are officially informed about the plan (which local governments often conceal), but also because it gives them an opportunity represent their interests and seek legal remedy.

*“These demolition campaigns happen pretty much on the quiet. They go there informally, with the help of some sort of security group, without any kind of official document and they offer the possibility of leaving right away.”* (civil servant)

### **c. Relationship with uniformed authorities<sup>20</sup>**

#### ***i. Discrimination***

According to a survey conducted on February 3, 2012, 30.7% of homeless people living in Budapest have been discriminated against by the representatives of authorities. The ratio was 38% among homeless people living in public spaces. This means that people living in public spaces are more exposed to discrimination than those living in an institution.

According to the results of our own research, **after public transportation, homeless people are most frequently discriminated against by the authorities. Altogether 48% of the respondents claimed so** (Table 6).

The difference between the February 3 survey and the results of our own study most likely comes from the difference in the sample and the nature of the questions.<sup>21</sup> Despite this difference, both studies confirm that a large percentage of homeless people are subject to discrimination by the authorities.

Half of the respondents reported to have been spoken to in a hurtful manner by the authorities. Only 26% of the respondents feel that they have been treated by the authorities just like ordinary citizens (Figure 5)

<sup>20</sup> As we have indicated earlier, here we refer primarily to public space supervisors and police officers. In certain cases, respondents also included district guards as well.

<sup>21</sup> One of these differences could be that while the February 3 survey had been conducted by social workers, our survey had been conducted exclusively by homeless persons. Also, in the February 3 survey, only one question referred to discrimination, while our survey focused almost exclusively on this subject.

*“When a colleague goes out to the same person for the twentieth time for the same problem, it’s guaranteed that he or she will use a more forceful tone. There’s no point in giving them a fine because they can’t pay it anyway. So the colleague will move them on with a more forceful tone. I’m not even disputing that, I’m sure that’s actually happening.” (public space supervisor)*

A rather high percentage, 13% of people have reported ever having been assaulted by the authorities (Figure 5).

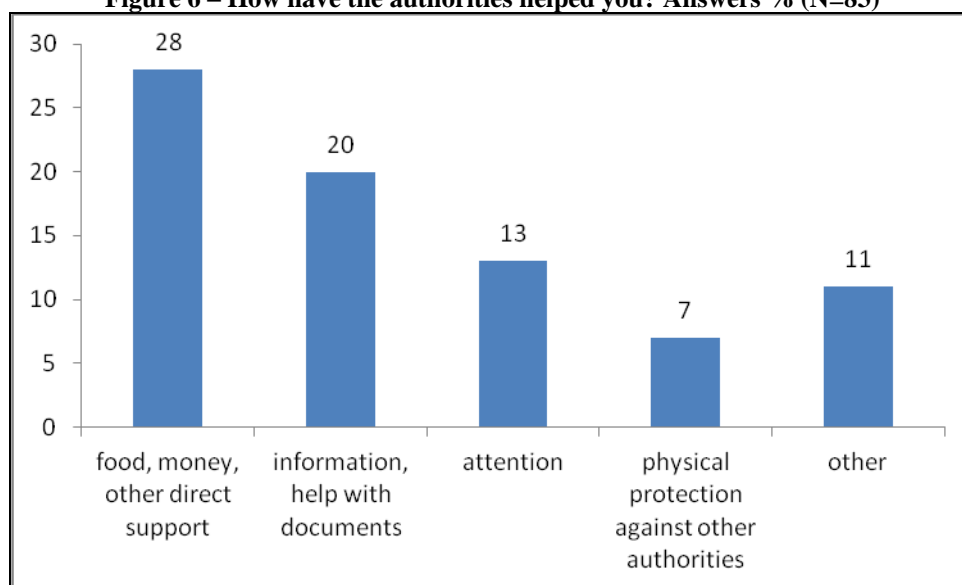
Although in the closed-ended questions we didn’t differentiate between different uniformed enforcers of the law, from the answers given to the open-ended questions it became obvious that homeless people have a slightly different opinion of police officers and public space supervisors. Although homeless people have both positive and negative experiences with both authorities, they typically find the behavior of public space supervisors more aggressive.

31% of respondents experienced discrimination by public space supervisors, while “only” 26% of respondents reported that they have experienced discrimination by police officers (Figure 4). We received similar results when we asked them about who treated them in a humiliating manner. 37% of respondents spontaneously mentioned public space supervisors, and 24% of them mentioned police officers.

*ii. Help from the authorities*

**24 percent of respondents have received help from the representatives of authorities. In most cases, homeless people were offered food or money, 20% were given information or help with an official document. Attention was mentioned by 13%, physical protection and protection from other authorities by another 7%. Further 11% referred to other forms of assistance (Figure 6).**

**Figure 6 – How have the authorities helped you? Answers % (N=83)**



The police report<sup>22</sup> on the interaction between police officers and homeless people supports the claim that while police officers often harass homeless people, they also play a substantial role in assisting them. Of the 720 recorded cases of police-homeless interactions in January 2010, police officers gave information to homeless people in 598, called an ambulance in 105, and called a crisis car in 13 cases. 1205 encounters were recorded in February 2010, when information was provided in 1108, ambulance called in 81, and crisis car was summoned in 5 cases. In March of the same year, police officers gave information to homeless people in 817, and called an ambulance in 58 cases, out of a total of 891 interactions. Of course, we do not know what exactly “giving information” entails, what tone the conversation took, and whether the homeless people were asked to show their ID cards or any other actions were taken. Nevertheless, the data shows that authorities play a crucial role in crisis prevention during the winter, and the number of such interactions diminishes in springtime.

Another, albeit less clear, form of police compassion is when a homeless person only receives a verbal warning when committing an infraction related to survival such as scavenging, urinating in public, begging, residing in public space.

*“How are we expected to fine a homeless? How would he pay the fine? This makes no sense at all.”* (public area supervisor)  
*“We could fine them, but we will not necessarily seek action right away, since we too need to consider proportionality. So we normally try to give a verbal warning twice, and only act on the third occasion.”* (police officer)

### ***iii. Identity check***

#### *Frequency of identity checks*

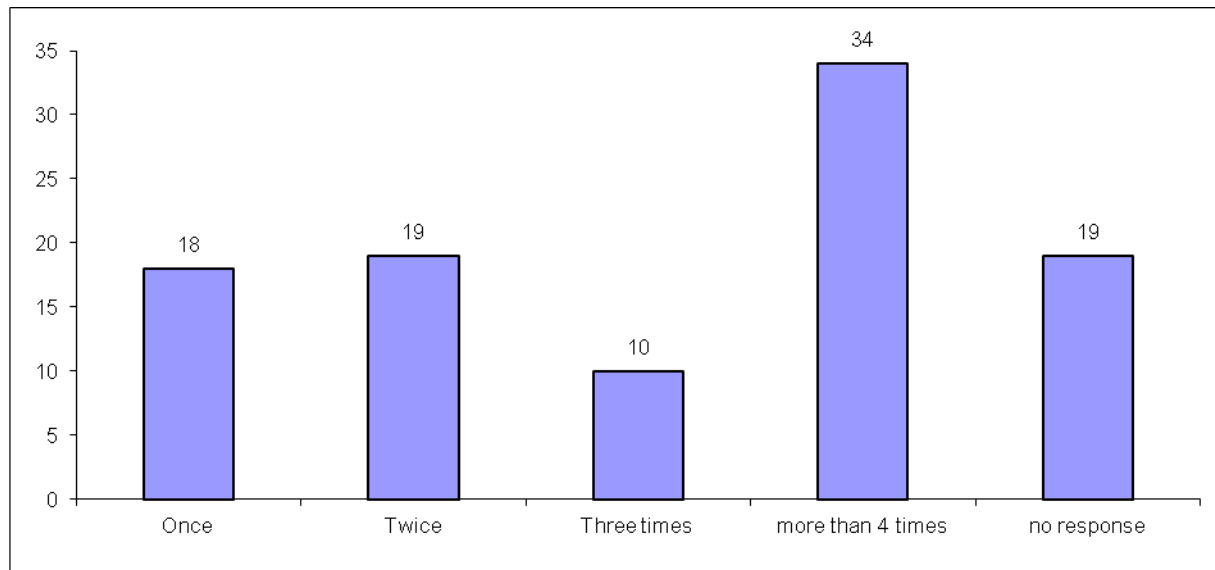
The findings of the *Hungarian Helsinki Committee*<sup>23</sup> show that identity checks, including document checks during road vehicle control, are particularly frequent in Hungary. Our study shows that the unusually frequent identity checks are emphatically true in the case of homeless people, as opposed to citizens with secure housing. Although this is no quantitative measure, experience shows that the homeless researchers of *Justice on the Streets* were involved in routine identity checks on multiple occasions, while non-homeless activists have never faced this treatment.

**In the 30 days preceding the questionnaire, 59% of homeless people were stopped by the police for an identity checks. One third of this group was stopped over 4 times in this period. (Figure 7)**

<sup>22</sup>Source: Freedom of Information Request from the National Police Service

<sup>23</sup> dr. András Kristóf Kádár, Júlia Körner, dr. Zsófia Moldova, dr. Balázs Tóth (2008). *Szigorúan ellenőrzött iratok. A magyar igazoltatási gyakorlat hatékonyságáról és etnikai aspektusairól – kutatási jelentés.* Helsinki Committee

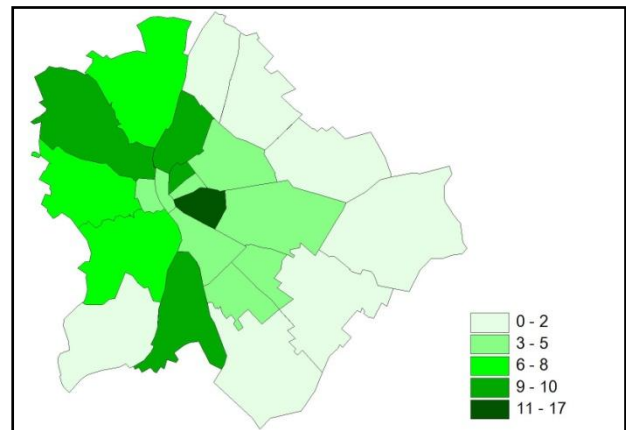
**Figure 7 – Number of identity checks within the past 30 days (N=357)**



63% of men and “only” 47% of women were stopped in the month prior to questioning.<sup>24</sup> We found no significant difference in the frequency of identity checks between the two sexes. More frequent checks on males correspond with national statistics as the identity check rate of men versus women is 75% to 25%.<sup>25</sup> However, homeless women are clearly stopped much more often than the average female population.

Locations of identity checks

Most identity checks happened in district VIII, then districts VI, XIII, II and XXI (Figure 8). Although the spatial distribution of identity checks is not a representative sample, it clearly shows some tendencies. Multiple factors lead to the salience of district VIII. On one hand, as mentioned earlier, this district holds the largest number of homeless service institutions, so there are more homeless people in this part of the city. A large part of the people we asked sleep in this district. Keleti railway station is also in district VIII, which is an important venue of identity checks – as shown in the following table.



**Figure 8: In which district was your identity checked?**

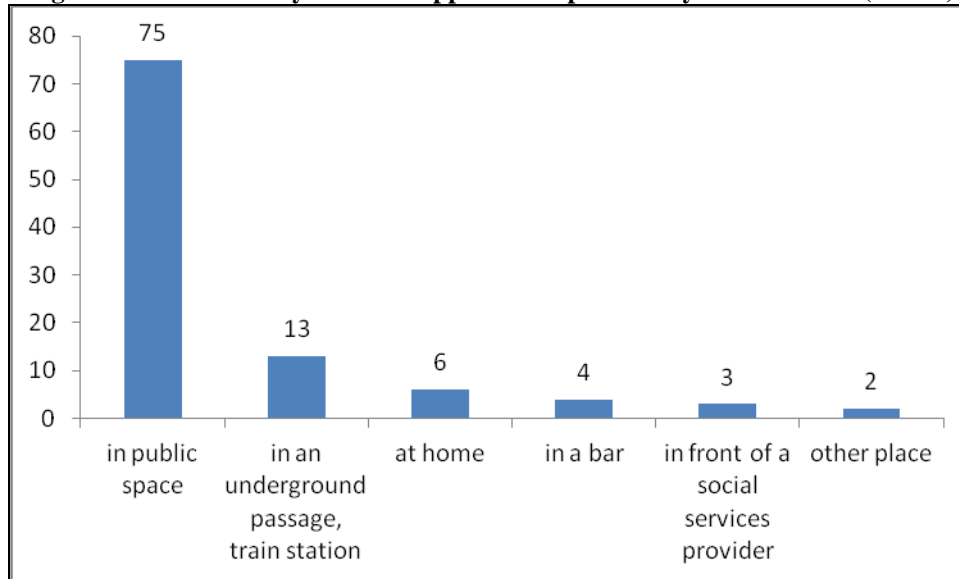
**In most cases (75%), identity checks happen in public spaces; however, 13% of respondents were checked in an underground pedestrian passage or at a railway station. (Figure 9)**

The salient position of district XIII is probably also due to the presence of the underground pedestrian passage and Nyugati railway station.

<sup>24</sup> Nmale 276; Nfemale: 81 PHI: -0,141 sig.: 0,008

<sup>25</sup> dr. András Kristóf Kádár, Júlia Körner, dr. Zsófia Moldova, dr. Balázs Tóth (2008). *Szigorúan ellenőrzött iratok. A magyar igazoltatási gyakorlat hatékonyságáról és etnikai aspektusairól – kutatási jelentés.* Helsinki Committee

**Figure 9 – Where have you been stopped in the past 30 days? Answers % (N=214)**



These numbers clearly show the tendencies observed by the 2008 report of the *Helsinki Committee*, claiming that in Hungary, the overwhelming majority (78%) of identity checks happens in public spaces. We could be led to believe that the emergence of “pubs” as a scene of ID checks shows a particular frequency among homeless people. However, 6% of identity checks occur in pubs, night clubs, and similar locations on a national level, too.

3% of respondents spontaneously mentioned that they were stopped by the police **in front of a homeless service facility**, and many other ID checks in public spaces probably also occur there. In fact, police officers often “ambush” a location where homeless people are waiting for a service, and conduct identity checks en masse. Police officers explain this to be the logic of crime prevention, instead of negative discrimination against homeless people: the more people are in one location, the higher their chances of finding a wanted person. On the other hand, homeless people believe mass ID checks to be based on prejudice (“if they are homeless, they have surely done something wrong”), and believe that authorities take advantage of their vulnerable situation (for example, if someone is standing in line for food, they will not leave the queue, since they may be risking a meal).

*“I asked the police officers how would they feel about people standing guard at their front door, and start harassing them as soon as they step out the door.” (social worker)*

### Carding “at home”

There is a significant difference between homeless and housed residents in terms of ID checks “at home”.

**6% of respondents were carded “at home”, that is, at the place where they were residing (e.g. night shelter, shack). (Figure 9)**

While police officers can only enter private property in exceptional cases, people staying in shelters and self-built shacks suffer constant harassment and identity check by the authorities. This is especially true since 2011, when the *National Police Service* did not renew the 1995 agreement stating that police officers had no right to raid homeless shelters.

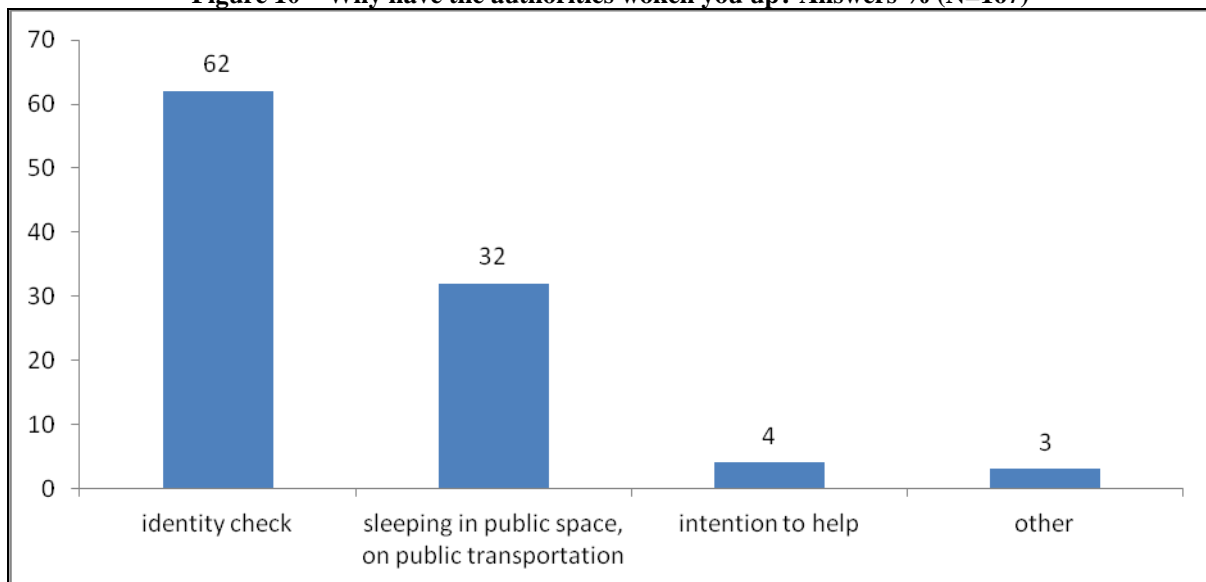
*“They took people in custody, often in the middle of the night, or they just came in to card a hundred people. In the street where I work, police regularly come with a van and just card everyone.” (social worker)*

Homeless people residing in public spaces are forced to do a number of things – for instance eating, sleeping, and urinating – on the streets that people with secure housing have the possibility to do at home, hidden from the eyes of others.

**47% of the homeless people we asked were woken up by the police. This mostly (in 58% of cases) happened in a public place, while to 33% “at home”, i.e. in their shack or tent, in a shelter, and another 8% in a private area (such as a staircase, a garage etc.).**

In 62% of the cases, the reason for waking the person in question was to check their ID. In 32% of the cases, they were woken up simply because they were sleeping in public space or on public transportation (Figure 10). 4% were woken up with good intentions, for example, to warn them about the weather being too cold or the area being unsafe.

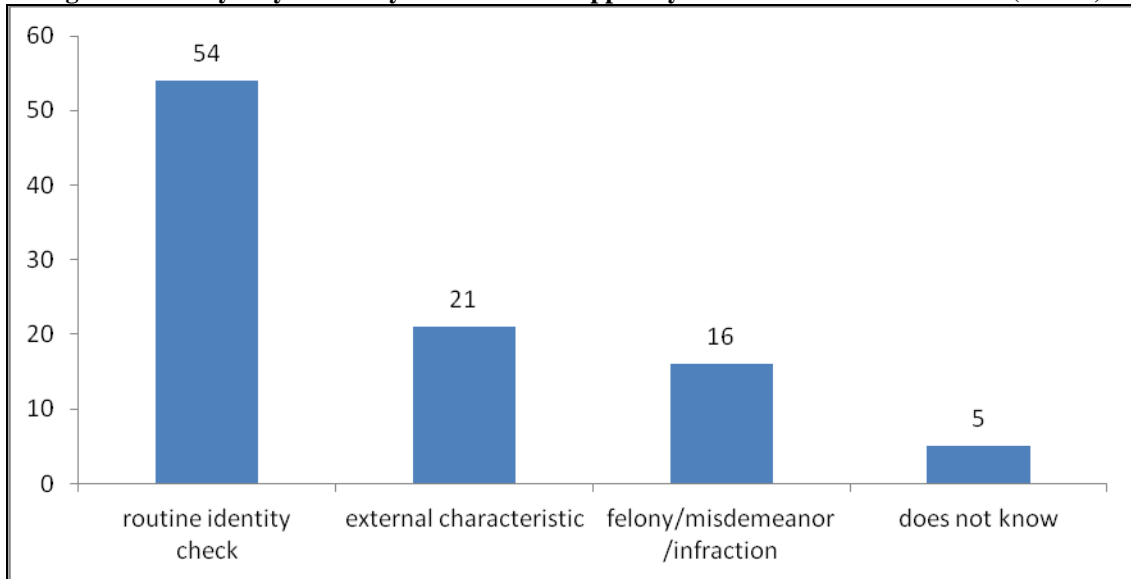
**Figure 10 – Why have the authorities woken you up? Answers % (N=167)**



Reasons for identity check

**More than half of the people were checked as a routine procedure, at random, and fifth of them thought they were stopped because of their appearance. 16% were carded for an infraction or a crime, while another 5% did not know the reason of their ID check. (Figure 11)**

**Figure 11 – Why do you think you have been stopped by the authorities? Answers % (N=214)**



The Police Act<sup>26</sup> defines the situations in which a person's documents can be checked in order to establish their identity. These are 1) public order and security; 2) crime prevention and control; 3) to establish the lawfulness of their presence in a location; 4) during road vehicle control; 5) in order to protect the rights of a person or an organization.

In the state socialist era identity verification was a common form of harassment by the police<sup>27</sup>. Even though it was never confirmed in formal or informal conversations with the police, it is widely believed that the practice continues today and our experience confirms this. How homeless people are treated by the police a certain area is up to the local police commissioner. For example, one of the members of the research team witnessed a briefing where the patrol was given the task to keep away the visibly poor from areas frequented by tourists. Another, high-profile example is district VIII, where in the fall of 2011 a new public order program was introduced. As a part of the program, there was a huge wave of identity checks and fines against homeless people for weeks.

*“The number of identity checks has grown rapidly, and the people in uniform command homeless people to leave. For example, a homeless man said that once he was IDed seven times a day and they also waited until he packed up his stuff and left. But the man said that even this is not enough to make him move to another district, – although one of the police officers advised him to move to the 'seven' – he just moves from one square to the other.”<sup>28</sup>*

It is a popular belief that police officers have to meet a certain quota of identity checks and that homeless people are an easy target because they spend a lot of time in public spaces. Even though we did not receive any official information about this, it is a fact that **in the yearly assessment of police officers, the number of identity checks they have conducted is taken into consideration.**<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Act XXXIV on the Police (1994).

<sup>27</sup> Horváth Sándor (2008). Csavargók, hajléktalanok, koldusok. A társadalmi gondoskodás rejtett gyakorlata Budapest az 1960-as években. *Történelmi Szemle* 3. 359-381.

<sup>28</sup> Wirth Zsuzsanna (2012). Legyőzte a hajléktalanok serege a keménykedő polgármestert. *Origo* [www.origo.hu/itthon/20120926-hajlektalanok-jozsefvarosban-egy-eve-kezdodtek-kocsis-mate-intezkedesei.html](http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20120926-hajlektalanok-jozsefvarosban-egy-eve-kezdodtek-kocsis-mate-intezkedesei.html)

<sup>29</sup> dr. Kádár, András Kristóf, Körner, Júlia, dr. Moldova, Zsófia, dr. Tóth, Balázs (2008). Control(led) Group – Final Report on the Strategies for effective Police stop and Search (STEPSS) Project, p. 23 (emphasis by us)



It is often argued that the more frequent identity checks of homeless people is justifiable, since they are more likely to commit infractions or crimes. However the “success rate” between the average population and homeless people deserves a comparison. According to the report of the *Hungarian Helsinki Committee*, identity checks among the wider population led to captures only in 1%, to arrests in 2% and to charges of infraction in 18% of the cases. These ratios mirror the information we received from our homeless respondents: in their case, 16% of identity checks took place because an infraction or crime was committed (see Figure 11). So checking the identity of a homeless person is no more justified than that of other citizens.

**Overall it seems that there is no ground for the widespread and frequent identity checks that homeless people experience and this practice meets the criteria of harassment.** We agree with the findings of the *Hungarian Helsinki Committee* that “On the whole it appears that the police use of ID checks is ineffective; large numbers of people are being inconvenienced by the police for ID checks, with little result. This data refutes the argument that extensive checks are an efficient tool against criminality, and highlights the sheer amount of police time wasted conducting ID checks.”<sup>30</sup>

*“In a way it is embarrassing to us. There are units who have already been at the scene. If we see the same person in the same stop several times, we ID him or her every time. Or they act in a certain way and after the local patrol, we also ID the person and then whoever else is also around, they ID him or her again. We don't tell each other whose identity has been checked, so the same person can be checked five, six, seven or eight times by different patrolling units.”* (police officer)

Treatment during identity check

Homeless people experience discrimination as the target of identity checks, but also during the process of identity verification.

**According to 57% of respondents, homeless people are treated worse during an identity check, while according to 31% there is no difference between how homeless and not homeless citizens are treated.** (Table 8)

*“Authorities do not treat the same way those who are obviously homeless.”* (homeless respondent)

**Table 8 – Do you think that there is a difference between the treatment of homeless and non-homeless people when it comes to an identity check? N, %**

	N	%
homeless are treated worse	195	57
everybody treated the same way	106	31
homeless are treated better	1	0
doesn't know	42	12
total	344	100

<sup>30</sup> dr. Kádár, András Kristóf, Körner, Júlia, dr. Moldova, Zsófia, dr. Tóth, Balázs (2008). Control(led) Group – Final Report on the Strategies for effective Police stop and Search (STEPSS) Project, p. 25

## Ethnic and social profiling

**Ethnic profiling**, the practice of more frequent identity verification of certain ethnic groups to prevent crime is quite widespread among police forces around the world and is quite common against the Roma in Hungary. A Roma person is three times more likely to be stopped by the police than it is justifiable by their proportion in the total population.<sup>31</sup> Some staff members of the *Hungarian Civil Liberties Union* recite a conversation with a police officer:

- I fine the filthy Gypsies, because there isn't a bell, a light or brake on their bike.  
- Do you fine non-Gypsies for the same?  
- No.  
- So then why do you fine the Gypsies?  
- Because they are filthy. What I see is that they go to the post office, get the [welfare] money, but they don't pay any bills. And then I shouldn't even fine the filthy?  
- I heard that the police expects you to fine them, is that true?  
- This isn't written down, but we impose fines, because then they can see that we are working. They need the statistics. We get a point for every fine. If the two of us fine together, it's a half point each. If I don't have enough points then they fuck with me.  
- And what are the points for? Do you get promoted easier or do you get extra money?  
- Oh, no. It's not good for anything.<sup>32</sup>

According to the *Helsinki Committee*, ethnic profiling “misdirects law enforcement resources, alienating some of the very people whose cooperation is necessary for effective crime detection and prevention.”<sup>33</sup>

We found in our research that there is not only **ethnic**, but also **social profiling** which affects the visibly poor, specifically homeless-looking people. Like ethnic profiling, identity checks based on social profiling are just as discriminatory. Even though check someone’s ID is one of the least harmful police practices, its too frequent and unjustifiable use is extremely detrimental. During an identity check, the police officer not only confines the citizen’s personal liberty and learns about their personal data,<sup>34</sup> but the process itself can be humiliating and stigmatizing. This is especially true for those who are stopped for an ID checks several times a week.

### **d. Residing in public place**

In the spring of 2011, the municipal assembly of Budapest signed an ordinance that banned residing in a public place. From January of 2012, it was elevated to the national level one it was introduced in the Act on Infractions. According to the law, “those who use the premises of a public space in a different way than it was intended, use it for residence or to store their belongings commit an

<sup>31</sup> No more breaches of law are detected in the case of either homeless or Roma Hungarians when stopped by the police than in the average population or as it is explained by their proportion in the general population.

<sup>32</sup> Source: “Because they are filthy” at [http://jogtalanul.blog.hu/2012/10/10/mert\\_retkel](http://jogtalanul.blog.hu/2012/10/10/mert_retkel)

<sup>33</sup> dr. Kádár, András Kristóf, Körner, Júlia, dr. Moldova, Zsófia, dr. Tóth, Balázs (2008). Control(led) Group – Final Report on the Strategies for effective Police stop and Search (STEPSS) Project, p. 3

<sup>34</sup> dr. Kádár, András Kristóf, Körner, Júlia, dr. Moldova, Zsófia, dr. Tóth, Balázs (2008). Control(led) Group – Final Report on the Strategies for effective Police stop and Search (STEPSS) Project

infraction.” According to the law, punishment is only lawful if the municipality in which area the case happened, provides services for the homeless.<sup>35</sup>

This law made Hungary the only country of the European Union where being homeless can be punished by a fine and/or imprisonment. The *Commissioner for Fundamental Rights* asked the *Constitutional Court* to revoke the law, because the punishment of residing in public space does not punish a conduct, but means the “criminalization of homelessness as a state or situation (status),” which goes against the right to equal dignity and rule of law.<sup>36</sup> In the fall of 2012, the *Constitutional Court* declared the law unconstitutional and revoked it immediately. In response, the government is proposing to include the clause in the Constitution of Hungary during its fourth modification in the March of 2013.

**According to our survey, authorities have taken measures against 23% of our respondents because of “residing in public space.”**

Based on the statistics of the *Hungarian Civil Liberties Union*, in the period that the law was in effect, more than 2000 people were charged with illegally residing in public space and close to a total of 30 million HUF (140 thousand USD) were incurred as fines.

We also asked our interviewees about the purpose of punishing homelessness.<sup>37</sup> Most respondents brought up political gains or deterrence as the main reason behind this legislation.

*“This is a form of deterrence. I usually hear that they don't even want to enforce this law, they just want it as a form of warning so that if a homeless person sees a police officer, they go away by themselves.”* (Budapest assembly member)

*“A lot of people try to make the impression that our goal is to punish homeless people. But I don't hope any money from this; I want this to be deterrence. I do not think that you can get fifty thousand forints from a homeless person. I want them not to be at places where they are not allowed to stay.”* (mayor of Budapest)

As far as we know, neither police officers nor the leadership of the police agree that homelessness is a question of policing. As a result, they have been hesitant to enforce this law.<sup>38</sup>

*“We decided that this is a stupid law. It costs a lot, but doesn't gain anything.”* (public space supervisor)

<sup>35</sup> For an infraction an on-the-spot fine of 5 to 50 thousand forints can be imposed. If it is repeated within six months the fine could be 70 thousand. But if somebody does not confess to the infraction, the fine at the end of the proceedings could be up to 150 thousand forints. According to the new law, every repeat of an infraction results in an increase of the fine and if it is repeated three times within a half year, it can be punished by imprisonment.

<sup>36</sup> Source: AJB-6724/2010

<sup>37</sup> Today there are more than 10 thousand homeless people in Budapest, and there are about 6 thousand beds in the homeless services system. So if every homeless people would “decide” today that they no longer want to sleep on the street or in shacks, but in a shelter, there would not be enough places for 4-5 thousand people.

<sup>38</sup> According to *Petőfi Utca*, a news website, “Dr. Zoltán Székely, lawyer of the Police Union of Hungary, said that most police officers have a negative opinion about the new regulation and feel that they have to do a job that is the social workers’ responsibility. Székely thinks that the police officers are not happy about the task, because they feel that they do not have efficient methods to carry it out. Moreover homeless people live on the street because they don't have any other choice, so they will eventually return. Therefore, according to Székely, they try to avoid enforcing the pointless measure as much as they can”. Source: [http://petofiuutca.blog.hu/2011/12/20/brutalisabbak\\_a\\_rendoroknel\\_a\\_kozteruletsek](http://petofiuutca.blog.hu/2011/12/20/brutalisabbak_a_rendoroknel_a_kozteruletsek)

#### 4. INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Our survey primarily measured direct discrimination experienced by homeless people. However, the interviews we conducted with professional working with the homeless also revealed indirect discrimination and systemic problems as well.

##### a. Homelessness and social exclusion

Several interviewees put forward what was also obvious from the responses of homeless people in our survey: in contemporary Hungarian society, living without a home is in itself an excluded, stigmatized predicament, which is almost impossible to leave behind without outside help.

*“It's the situation that's humiliating, someone having to live below a certain level.”*  
(social worker)

*“The life situation of not having any money in your pocket, of having an empty stomach, and of not having a place to lie down at night – in my worldview this in itself is discriminatory.”* (social worker)

*“The fact that they can't get cleaned up and that's how they have to use public transportation, that's how they have to look for a job or go to a store, or in general, that they have to live like that triggers all sorts of discrimination.”* (social worker)

*“The forest dwelling communities are made up of people who want to live in a normal social environment. But they can't because society is like a popcorn machine – rarely is there a way back.”* (healthcare professional)

##### b. Systemic problems

The possible causes of discrimination suffered by the homeless were approached by interviewees in different ways. Some blamed the homeless, while some looked for explanations among those who discriminate against people living without a home.

*“They are discriminated against when they look really unkempt. Nobody has a sign on their forehead saying, 'I don't live anywhere, I'm homeless', but if someone looks very unkempt, he or she surely can't enter a bank. They really look at him or her there. A lot of elderly people aren't homeless but they look like it; I'm sure they're also discriminated against on the job market.”* (civil servant)

*“We've had a homeless person here who was really cherished, like 'how nice he is in spite of being homeless'. So the problem is not being homeless but making an unpleasant impression. If you're not homeless but make an unpleasant impression, you will be disliked just the same. So it's not about being homeless or not, but whether you irritate the dear civil servant or not.”* (civil servant)

Beyond personal contact, many interviewees pointed to the social and political system as the source of discrimination and harassment. The inadequacy of the social services came up very often during the interviews.

*“The state releases a lot of children [from state care] into the wide world without proper education. A client of mine told me that he can easily pay the fee to re-take an exam he failed but – and I shouldn't tell anyone – he doesn't know how to fill out a check. At age 20 or 21. (civil servant)*

*“Existing social services conserve homelessness. They weren't interested in showing a way out. That this is true is supported by the continuous and steep rise in the number of people becoming homeless in the last 20 years.” (district mayor)*

*“The system as it is today can't help the homeless leave homelessness behind. All it can do is keep them being homeless, and this is not good. This is not useful at all.” (civil servant)*

*“Putting a lot of miserable, overburdened, frustrated people together, that's not gonna push anyone forward, it just makes the situation worse.” (social worker)*

*“A student called me to ask what a homeless-producing institution is. I told him I don't know of any, because production is what they do in the preserves factory and on the production line. These institutions may not work well, but you can't say that they're producing the homeless.” (social worker)*

*“The law doesn't specify the exact level of homeless services a municipality has to provide. It is a mandatory task, but if one person is looked after, it's ticked off on the list. The law doesn't specify on what level this task needs to be fulfilled. (Budapest assembly member)*

The low quality of the work carried out by social workers as well as the lack of professional management and adequate work environment were mentioned several times during the interviews as the source of negative treatment of the homeless.

*“A lot of my colleagues are in social work not by choice but out of necessity.” (social worker)*

*“My clients are obviously not gentlemen and gentlewomen, so sometimes you've had enough, but social workers have no place to vent. My workplace doesn't provide an adequate opportunity for this. There isn't any professional supervision to talk it over.” (social worker)*

*“The [professional] team is a pain in everyone's back, because this is such a rigid institution that you can't achieve or change anything.” (social worker)*

*“I may have had a bad day sometimes. Sometimes a person breached the house rules in a way that could have been overlooked, but at that moment I got angry and kicked him out of the shelter or didn't let him in. I must have given incorrect information to people sometimes. This is part of the deal. It must have happened, and it surely will. I'm not proud of it, and I'm sorry and I try to reduce it, but with 200 clients coming in a day, it happens.” (social worker)*

Several interviewees emphasized the responsibility of the state and the lack of a comprehensive policy as the main cause of the hardships experienced by the homeless.

*“What I see is that the state keeps receding from basic social services.”* (social worker)

*“There has been no social program developed in relation to homelessness other than the law enforcement approach. If you ask a minister of social affairs about what should be done, I'm not sure that he or she has a clue. No program was put together in two years.”* (Budapest assembly member)

*“I suppose people at the Ministry of National Resources have no clue about this at all. They're in the same role: we don't know anything about it, so we'd rather back out from it.”* (healthcare professional)

*“It's not only about the homeless, but also about those becoming impoverished. Who cares about their fate? The government always negotiates with the parties. But who negotiates with those who lose their homes?”* (civil servant)

Addressing the lack of comprehensive solutions, some of the interviewees claimed that politicians had no interest in solving these systemic problems.

*“I think politicians could work out a much better program than anyone else if it was in their political interest. They would produce tip-top programs in a minute, and they would allocate funds for it. But of course if a mayor says that he has given flats to five homeless people, he loses a lot of votes in today's Hungary. Because we have the prejudice that: why is it the homeless again, getting something, why isn't it, say, my daughter, who isn't homeless but who lives here and who is nice?”* (civil servant)

*“Social housing makes up only a minimal portion of rental units. There are more cost-based and market-based apartments for rent. New contracts are based on market prices to ensure a higher income for the municipality. Municipalities get very little money through the homeless, so they don't have much for these purposes. But if they gained something from it, they could mobilize an awful lot of money.”* (civil servant)

*“In words, everyone always claims to be sensitive, and everyone always says that the homeless are also human, but then they still accept that the homeless are violently evicted. The politicians I've talked to really simplify the issues.”* (Budapest assembly member)

Several interviews point out that even though most decision-makers do not search for systemic solutions for the problem of homelessness, there still exists a social minimum that has to be provided. This minimum is primarily related to saving human lives and to physical protection.

*“For the time being, I don't let them [the homeless] be hurt; on the contrary, for the time being I build shelters for them and give them work. ... Physical violence against them is unacceptable. True, leading them out of underground passages is a form of coercion, but I leave no room for any kind of extreme atrocities. There are people here who are very angry with the homeless, but as long as I'm the mayor of Budapest, they won't be subject to extreme solutions.”* (mayor of Budapest)

*“Death by hypothermia breaks a taboo even stronger than the prejudice of not liking the homeless.”* (civil servant)

### **c. Discriminative systems**

The interviews pointed to four fields where it is not the general operation of the system that negatively impacts homeless people but where the social or legal system has been developed in a discriminative manner in the first place. These fields include labor relations, aid distribution, health care and home address regulations.

#### ***i. Segregated unemployment and benefit distribution centers***

Two institutions in Budapest today treat homeless people in what can be described as essentially a segregated manner. *An unemployment center for “those without an address” operates in Haller street, and the municipality's “information”, or in reality, benefit distribution center dealing exclusively with homeless people is located on Könyves Kálmán boulevard.* The operation of both institutions and the lack of cooperation between them have been heavily criticized during the interviews. The existence of an institution dealing specifically with homeless people could be explained by the special needs of its clients as well as by prioritized social efforts. However, civil servants working in the segregated offices do not receive any special training or guidelines, and the offices do not offer any services beyond those offered by an average municipal authority or unemployment center.

*“A few mega-institutions have come into being, such as Könyves. Könyves used to be just a homeless shelter: temporary shelter, drop-in center and one night shelter. Then the municipality moved in, then they started to distribute benefits there, then health services moved in on the ground floor, then Menhely Foundation moved in, and now a hospital section is being set up. In a word, it's become a place of a lot of different services, and I'm not sure that this is a good thing. Very nasty thoughts have come to my mind, such as OK, let's put up some barbed wire with a sign that says 'ghetto'. ... In my view, this is awfully bad for the homeless and for the society at large, too.”* (civil servant)

*“I think it is discriminatory in itself to have the homeless separated as if they had some infectious disease. What's so different in giving out the benefits? Why do they need to be segregated?”* (civil servant)

*“[The numbered tickets] in themselves aren't offensive because such systems are common in ‘regular’ offices, too. But this pen-like thing [where people have to wait], this is horrible.”* (civil servant).

*“You'll find out nothing in Könyves. As far as I know, all they tell you is to get your ass back to Haller, fetch some document and then you'll get something.”* (civil servant)

*“Eight minutes are calculated for a client, but you can't take care of anything in eight minutes. As long as this present system remains, it's hopeless. A person comes in, then you need to find out what they want. He wants money. Okay, but what kind? Then he finally tells you that it's temporary aid...”* (civil servant)

*“The unemployment center sends a guy to a two-month course after which he'll still be sweeping the streets because he's not wanted, because he's not marketable on the job market. This doesn't make any sense.”* (civil servant)

*“There's no special training. I was hired from the street and three days later I was dealing with clients.”* (civil servant)

## **ii. Health care**

Health care services for the homeless have been severely criticized. Some of the critiques pointed to the operation of the social services system and the lack of a comprehensive housing and social policy, drawing attention to the fact that although a person's actual illness may be cured, the cause of the illness – his or her homelessness and poverty – cannot be solved by the health services.

*“Their social misery can't be improved by health care.”* (healthcare professional)

*“If making them healthy could help them get back to the normal bonds of society, it would be great. But since we give them no opportunity, since we only try to fix their health while otherwise denying them every chance... This is like a funnel where it's really hard to bring someone to the top from the bottom.”* (healthcare professional)

The Hungarian health care system often comes under heavy criticism by all members of society, not only by the homeless. The general difficulties in its daily functioning and the lack of resources bring about frustration both for health care professionals and for their clients. This is exacerbated by the difficulties faced by homeless people, as it appears that the health care institutions available as a fundamental civil right cannot provide them with proper care.

*“A real problem is that the homeless are often in a condition that if they are put in an ambulance, then the ambulance can't be used again. There used to be a special ambulance for patients with infectious disease, and that was an extra use of resources.”* (healthcare professional)

*“As doctors know nothing about the lifestyle of the homeless, about their background, or about the social network, they become agitated when it comes to this. It's a shaky ground, the doctors don't know what to do, so they just want them out. So the reason why a lot of doctors back out from the homeless problem is that they don't have enough information and are afraid of making a mistake. They aren't experts on this, they just want to be left alone.”* (healthcare professional)



*“The recovery rate from leg ulcer is worse for the homeless than for other people, and often there's some other illness in the background. If you want to cure it, you'll need a lot of patience, a large amount of money and heaps on antibiotics. Not to mention the attention you need to pay to how the patient's health condition changes. I'll give you an example. This old man is hospitalized: 'What a big wound you have on your leg, old man! We'll cut your leg off, okay?' 'Well no, not okay. It's not okay to cut my leg off! 'Well, if you reject treatment, then leave.' And then he's kicked out. (healthcare professional)*

*“When a homeless person suffers from two illnesses, it really is a problem. Which hospital ward should treat them first? If I send them to the psych ward, they can't treat their medical problem such as diabetes, and then when their blood glucose level gets out of range, they can't do anything about it. If I send them to the internal medicine ward, their psychiatric illness will make them act unacceptably, which is a great burden. It's not that different for people with a home, but they at least have a family I can contact, so it's easier. You have some space.” (healthcare professional)*

*“A homeless person can't soak his or her feet in disinfectant. First, there's no place to do it, second where are they gonna get the disinfectant?” (healthcare professional)*

*“The difference between a homeless person and others is that although they walk the same path to recovery, the homeless person is stopped when he/she is released from the hospital. Other patients have some options to go home and get better, but the homeless person is back on the street. There used to be a tramp on Hunyadi square, with braces in his shin – he had been run over by a bus. He was walking around on crutches; the hospital didn't want him. Other patients in the same condition stay at home, but he was living on the square. When he had to go for a checkup, he called an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital.” (healthcare professional)*

*“If we take in everyone without an address, the health care services will soon become social services. And then when people with real illnesses need a hospital bed we won't have any.” (healthcare professional)*

*“But where should I send a homeless person who is “released home”?” (healthcare professional)*

Instead of reforming the health care services to which everyone has a legal right in a way to make them serve everyone's needs, the answer to the problems discussed above was the development of a segregated system of health institutions dealing exclusively with homeless people.

*“The first task of these institutions is to adapt the homeless person to normal health care services when they are taken in from the street. Parasite removal, cleanup, eating-drinking in order to give them some strength – enough to at least reach the toilet at the end of the corridor. The other task is about releasing them from the hospital. In many cases the hospital claims, after eight days of treatment, that they were examined, their medicines are set, now it's time to go home. But there is no home. A homeless person takes a lot longer to heal due to hunger, malnutrition and vitamin deficiency. And a period of eight days isn't even enough for a normal person to heal. So what do you*

*expect of a homeless patient? So the second function [of these institutions] is that after they are discharged, they allow them to get better.” (healthcare professional)*

Even though separate institutions for the homeless have been set up, the regulations do not take the existence of these institutions into account in any way. This again leads to sub-par services. When it comes to specialized institutions, it is exactly the “equal treatment” that disadvantages the homeless.

*“I think it's a really serious problem that the treatment-time based reduction of funding affects homeless in-patient chronic internal medicine wards just as much as it does normal hospitals.” (healthcare professional)*

### **iii. Social housing**

The applications for social housing – whose aim is exactly to provide housing for poor people – often set criteria of eligibility that homeless or poor people find difficult or impossible to meet. In such cases, the homeless and the poor are again disadvantaged.

*“Apartments subsidized by the municipality of Budapest set rather difficult eligibility criteria, and a lot of money needs to be paid in advance. The person who can pay the rent for years in advance, the more years the better, is usually the winner. This is not a disadvantage specifically for the homeless but for the poor in general. A poor person, just like a homeless person, can't pay the rent for five years up front. There's no differentiation between those who are homeless and those who aren't, but there is between the haves and the have-nots. (civil servant)*

*“A lot of people in the district live with their parents and grandparents, and they are all pretty poor. They keep being rejected despite the fact that there are lots of empty apartments.” (civil servant)*

*“There's an elderly woman here in the district, her application for social housing has been rejected for the seventh time now. The only difference between her and me is that her parents were drunks with eight children, and mine weren't. The starting point is different. She's a single mother, she's working and she lacks the capital that you usually have your parents to thank for. (Budapest assembly member)*

### **iv. Home address**

Regulations relating to citizens' address often disadvantage homeless people. One reason for this is that even if the law does not differentiate between different home addresses, people having only a municipal address (and most homeless people fall under this category) cannot use a number of services such as bank cards or cell phones. In addition, home address serves as the basis for almost every civil right, including the right to vote as well as welfare. Being homeless generally entails that the person's home address is not sorted out. As a result, homeless people are often at a disadvantage when taking care of some administrative issue or when trying to exercise a civil right.

*“At the moment, every kind of monetary aid is tied to one's home address. And many people don't have their address card sorted out, it's really not sorted out on several levels. It would make a lot more sense if you just got the benefit wherever you really live.”* (civil servant)

*“I can't help him because of the address, because of the question of jurisdiction. It's not like he smells so I can't help him but it's simply an administrative problem.”* (civil servant)

## 5. SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Interviewees brought up several suggestions about how to reduce direct discrimination and how to rectify system-level problems. Although the suggested solutions are by no means homogeneous, they do provide a multitude of potential approaches, very few of which are realized in practice.

### a. Reducing prejudice

*“The terminology could be changed. As far as I know, some people in the homeless services still use the word ‘bum.’* (Budapest assembly member)

*“It would be important for doctors to be informed, and we should also have social nurses in hospitals. It's not only the homeless who would need them but also the elderly and the disabled.”* (healthcare professional)

*“Proposed bills should be consulted with the homeless as well, not only with the experts.”* (civil servant)

*“A self-organizing advocacy group could play a role in producing an informational publication.”*(healthcare professional)

*“There are these communities getting together in the forest, trying to build some sort of a micro-society there. They build their homes from whatever they can find. It's not a very appealing environment, but there are respectful and nice efforts. They don't always work, and they also face social prejudice. But I think these little forest communities could be properly managed, or at least we could give them some space.”* (healthcare professional)

*“It'd be really important for politicians to provide a good example. People used to be very tolerant; in the last 20 years they've become very intolerant. They might have difficulties making ends meet, and they need a scapegoat. They also like looking down on those worse off than they are.”* (representative in Budapest)

### b. Systemic solutions

*“Certain services should be available for everyone as a civil or a human right, and then we're already much better off. There wouldn't be this sleeping on the street and those billions spent on homeless shelters.”* (social worker)

*“It'd be better for the homeless, too, to meet people in a more integrated environment [while taking care of administrative business]. Now it's like they live in a vacuum, or placed under a glass bell.” (civil servant)*

*“If you have a job, you have a higher self-esteem. Prevention should be emphasized, and psychological motivations studied, because a lot of homeless people suffer from alcoholism and various other addictions. Prevention, psychological treatment of the whole thing and re-entry into the world of employment.” (police officer)*

*“We'd need psychologists, lawyers, employment counselors to prepare people to look up five jobs and get to the job interviews. This is a task in itself.” (civil servant)*

*“It's not Budapest's job to look after every homeless of the country who feels like coming to Budapest. This simply can't be managed. ... I firmly believe that our primary job is to provide for the homeless whose last registered address was in Budapest.” (mayor of Budapest)*

*“It's not our goal to have them drop out of the welfare system, so in such cases we disregard the fact that they don't live in the district. They can't apply in the other district because they're not registered there. We thoroughly check on them, ask around, and if it's clear that there's nothing they can do, we disregard [the fact that though they are registered in the district, they don't live here].” (civil servant)*

*“We don't differentiate between them as humans whether they're homeless or not. As for them leading a homeless lifestyle, well, you have different kinds of clients.” (civil servant)*

*“There's a section of society in Hungary whom the job market will not take because they're not needed. This doesn't mean that they should be shot in the head. They should be given some minimal aid, and the jobs should be left alone so that those who are able and qualified could take them.” (civil servant)*

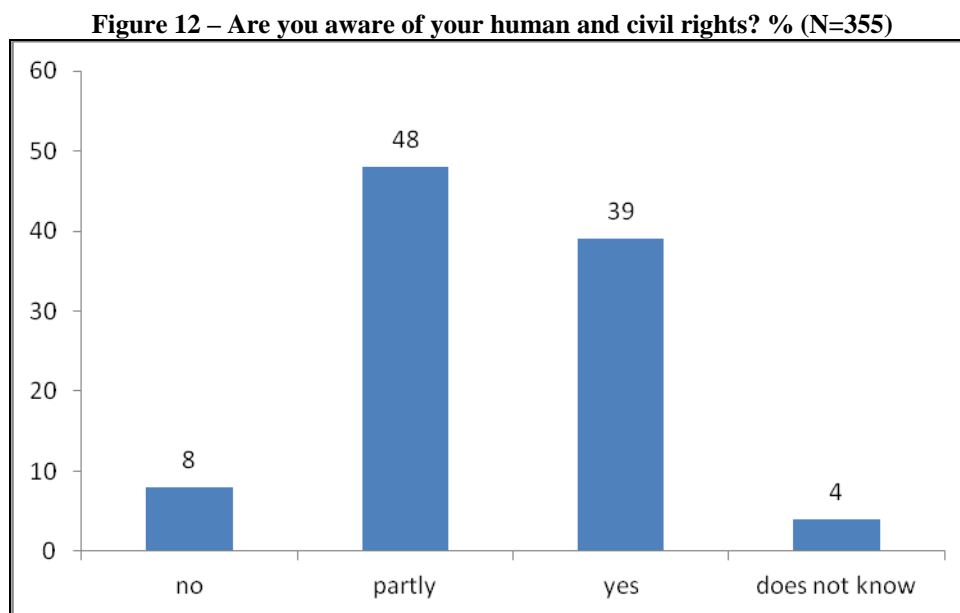
*“The employment and housing of the homeless could be supported. Municipalities in the country should be better supported so that this whole thing doesn't just hit them on the head, because then they'll talk about it as a problem. Politicians should be made interested in this so that they'd have some political gain from it. Or at least so that they wouldn't have any disadvantage if the term homeless is mentioned in the same sentence as their name. (civil servant)*

*“We need a high quality welfare system that produces ways out. A system that doesn't conserve the situation but shows the way to a dignified life and helps reach that life. One that doesn't discriminate but lifts you up.” (district mayor)*

*“We need a housing policy and a communal housing sector. This is a difficult thing; it's no coincidence that nobody has been able to work out a national housing policy. In this unstable situation I wouldn't start to reform the institutional system. I'd first try to improve the system by offering more temporary housing. Back to the apartment once they're in the system. I would also emphasize street work because today nobody walks up to a homeless person.”* (representative in Budapest)

## 6. AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT OF RIGHTS

**In their own judgment, almost half of the respondents partly, while 39 percent are fully aware of their human and civil rights. Those who are not aware of their rights make up 8 percent (Figure 12).**

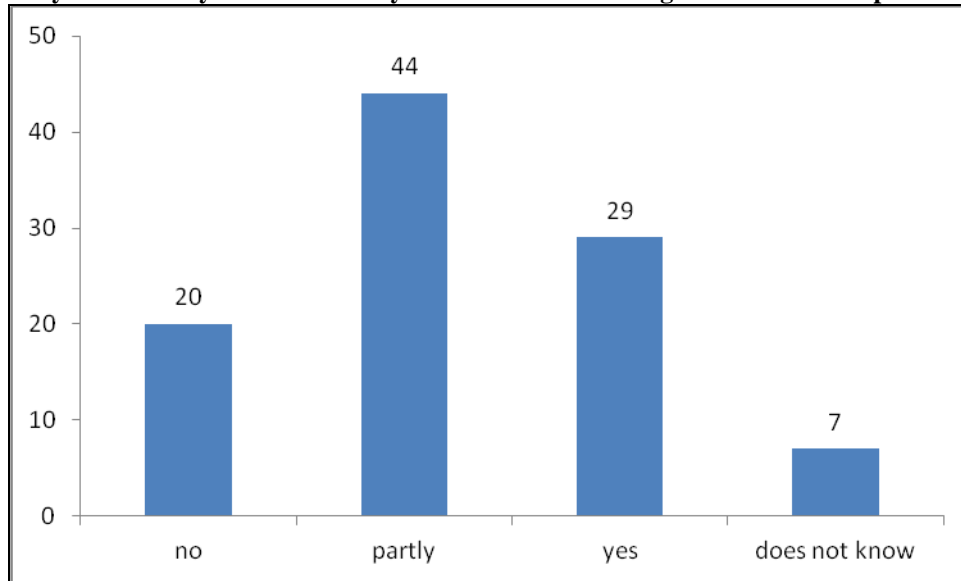


While filling out the questionnaires, we realized that some respondents did not understand this question. Thus, the responses may be unreliable. In order to measure the level of awareness of civil rights we would have needed more sophisticated and more specific questions. Despite the potential problems with the responses, we decided to publish the data because they confirm the assumption that most homeless people do not know everything they need to exercise their civil rights.

**One fifth of respondents claim not to be able to exercise their civil rights, while 44 % claim to be able to partly exercise their rights because of their homelessness. (Figure 13)**

Along with the previous figure, this confirms the assumption that despite a formal equality of rights, homeless people in Hungary today are second-class citizens: they cannot fully exercise the rights they have as residents of the country.

**Figure 13 – Do you feel that you can exercise your human and civil rights as a homeless person? % ((N=355)**



*“No money, no rights.” (homeless respondent)*

In order to find out the extent to which homeless people take up conflict when they feel they have been wronged, we asked them whether they had ever filed an official complaint for a grievance.

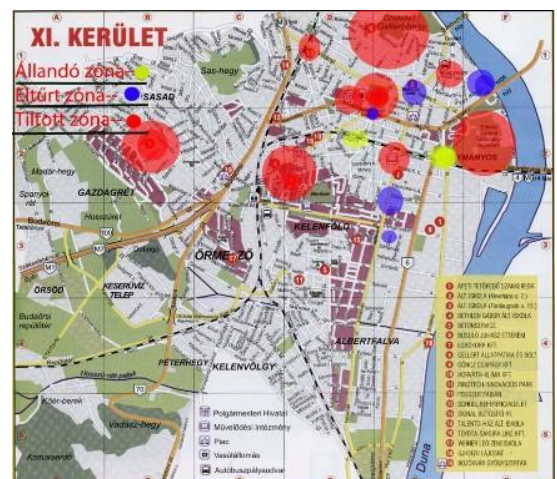
**9% of respondents have filed an official complaint, while 11% claim they have been turned away without proper attention when trying to file a complaint.**

*“There's no point in filing a complaint.” (homeless respondent)*

The proportion of complainants may be higher than expected, but we need to keep in mind that this question was also interpreted in different ways by the respondents. Further, the proportion is still lower than what it should be given the level of discrimination evidenced by our data.

In order to have a more complete picture of the frequency and type of complaints filed by homeless people, we inquired into the official data on such complaints received by local and central police departments, local and central public space supervising offices as well as by the transportation authority of Budapest. Data reveal that when a homeless person files a complaint, it is generally not in the fields where they are, according to our research, the most often discriminated against.

We received responses from 10 local public space supervising offices (district II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI and XV). Seven of them informed us that no homeless person had filed any complaint with them, two of them could not give us any information, and in one case we received no data but the municipality’s action plan dividing the district into “permanent”, “tolerated” and “forbidden” zones for the homeless. Although we found out nothing about the kind of complaints by the homeless filed with district XI regarding the behavior of public space supervisors, the document is very revealing



**Homeless-free zones in Újbuda**

about the discriminative approach of the local municipality (for a visual representation of the action plan, see the map on the right).

As for the police, the *Budapest Police Department* provided us with data for 2011 and the first six months of 2012, collected from local police departments. As this data-set only includes cases in which the complainant was described as homeless or in which the complaint makes this fact clear, it cannot be considered to be a precise statistical database. The data reveal that in 2011 six homeless people filed complaints with the police:

- in one case, the complainant considered the police procedure discriminative, and as he resisted it he was detained;
- in one case, a homeless person complained of police abuse;
- in one case, the homeless citizen complained about police action initiated after a report of a suspected crime;
- one complaint was filed against detention due to street music;
- two complainants objected to the tone of the officers in charge.

The data we received unfortunately reveal no information about how the complaints were handled. However, the complaints are in tune with the areas previously identified as conflictual such as police abuse and humiliating tone or treatment during police action.

In the first six months of 2012, the *Budapest Police Department* received two complaints from homeless people. In one case, the complaint was filed against an action of a public space supervisor. In the other case, the homeless person complained of police abuse.

According to the *Budapest Police Department*, 3447 complaints, reports and other submission were filed by citizens in 2011. As the police chief puts it in his letter to us, “in light of this figure, the number of homeless-related ... complaints is minuscule.” While we agree with this statement, we believe that the reason for this low number is not that objectionable police action is so rare but that homeless people simply do not file complaints. The reason for this is, first, that they do not see the point in doing it, are afraid or are unable to take up the administrative task of filing a complaint. Second, discrimination has become such an everyday part of their life that many homeless people barely recognize it and do not think much of it any more.

*“They often complain but when I tell them to write it down, they usually won’t.” (civil servant)*

Since its launch in 2008, the *Independent Police Complaints Board* (FRTP) received a very small number of complaints from homeless people. Here we will describe two cases that are representative of the most common cases that rarely make it to the complaints procedure.

FRTP Resolution No 349/2010 ( April 30): a homeless person was accused of bike theft by the police, was handcuffed for no reason and detained for an unreasonably long period of time. The investigation further revealed that the police officers breached the rules regarding meals during confinement and bathed the complainant in a humiliating manner.

*“The complainant was taken to the cell wearing underwear and socks. While detained, he was taken to the garage of the police department where he had to undress and was sprayed with cold water out of a hose. He was given a bar of soap to get cleaned up.”*

The board ruled that the police action repeatedly violated the complainant's rights to fair proceedings, personal freedom and human dignity and that the police was in breach of the prohibition on inhumane and degrading treatment. Consequently, the board established that a significant infringement of fundamental rights occurred.

F RTP Resolution 113/2012 (March 21): a distributor of the street newspaper *Fedél Nélkül* was detained for hours for traffic offenses.

*“The complainant considered the police action prejudiced, motivated by his homeless status. He claims to be aware of instructions directing that ‘the homeless have to be detained and locked up.’ In his point of view, his detention was completely unjustified – taking him to the police headquarters had neither a point nor a legal basis. He believes that the action against him was discriminative, infringing on the principle of equal treatment.”*

While the board did not establish that the complainant was discriminated against, it did find the length of the restriction of personal freedom disproportionate (the *Fedél Nélkül* distributor was detained for approximately two and a half hours), and so it established that a significant infringement of fundamental rights occurred. *Fedél Nélkül* distributors are unfortunately very often harassed and cited for begging or traffic violations. This signals that an act does not in itself need to be discriminative for it to be selectively applied to a certain group of people and thus to lead to discrimination and harassment.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For further information on the harassment of *Fedél Nélkül* distributors, see [http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2011/05/12/a\\_fedel\\_nelkul\\_terjesztes\\_no\\_zaklato\\_koldulas\\_nyertunk\\_a\\_birosagon](http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2011/05/12/a_fedel_nelkul_terjesztes_no_zaklato_koldulas_nyertunk_a_birosagon)



## V. The research team

### *Anna Bende*



I became an activist six years ago, when I joined the Man on the Street. This is where I met the people with whom I now work in *The City is For All* (AVM). When I'm not working for AVM, I'm a social worker, though to me activism and social work are inseparable. I'm an activist for the same reason I became a social worker: I'd like to live in a fairer, more equal society. I've got a lot in life: a loving, supportive family, friends, economic security, good schools; so it's my turn to give back. In *The City is For All* I have the opportunity to share my enthusiasm, my knowledge, my skills that are useful for the community, and at the same time I learn a lot from the others. AVM is a very inspiring environment; it forces you to keep learning and improving. It's not only a group but a real community where I feel secure and at home. For me personally, this is the end of a long road: AVM signals the arrival. I don't think I've ever done anything

more important in my life.

### *Gergely Lőrincz*



I was born on August 7, 1980 in Gyergyószentmiklós, Romania. I had a troubled childhood. My parents dumped me when I was three; they didn't look after me at all. I was raised partly by my grandmother, and partly by the children's home. I had Hungarian documents, so I went off in search of adventure. I spent three years abroad but my documents were stolen and I had to turn back – and I got off in Pest. I met an employee of the drop-in center in Kürt utca; he directed me to a shelter where I could spend the night. One day a buddy of mine showed up in the drop-in center with a girl. I got to know her and that's how I ended up in AVM and on the research team.

### *Linda Andrásné Kőházi*



I was born in 1966 in district IX of Budapest. My father worked as a driving instructor, my mother as a typist. I had a very religious family, too religious maybe. After finishing elementary school, I went to work as a printer. I had a long career in printing presses as a printer. In the meantime, I got married and had three sons. My husband passed away in 1994. Following a six-month period of single life, I met my second husband. We had a daughter together. My marriage went bust, and this, and other problems led to my children being taken to a children's home. We went into debt and had to sell our apartment to the “apartment mafia”. Soon after, my husband died. When I lost my home, I moved back in with my parents, but I couldn't stay there long: the continuous “terror” drove me out for good. As a homeless person, I have been several times to the shelter in Podmaniczky utca, the one-night shelter in Dózsa György út and in Dankó utca and to many workers' hostels. AVM is the apple of my eye:

it's a warm and friendly environment. I'm glad that I'm accepted here and that I've found friends. I'm glad that I've met people here who do care about the homeless.

## János Jáger



I was born in 1959 in Szolnok in a peasant family. I finished elementary school and studied to become a painter. I worked in various factories as a factory hand. I was enlisted for 18 months, after which I met a girl who got engaged to me. Two years later she died in a car crash together with my two-month old baby girl and my friend, a car racer. I had a house but it had to be sold to cover the costs of the funerals. My life went downhill from there: I started drinking, lost weight, went down to 50 kilos from my former 95 kilos. My parents and the girl's parents asked me to pull myself together, which I did, going back to work to Szolnok as a forklift driver. I was imprisoned for 6 and a half years for causing life-threatening bodily harm. Once I was out, I met a mother of three, and had a baby daughter with her; I lived with them for 5 years. She's become a beautiful girl, though I have only seen her once since. Once my wife left me, I wandered all over the place: I came to Pest to work to earn more money so that maybe she'd take me back. About 10 years ago I decided to stay in Pest. I've lived in the night shelter in Előd utca for 5 years. I only have one family member left, my younger sister, whom I sometimes visit. Now I live on picking trash, collecting glass and cardboard – I walk 15km a day. This is good because we earn enough to eat and I'm not cold. I never knock over trash bins [put out for recycling] and I rarely drink. I joined AVM when I heard of the research *Justice on the Streets*. AVM has meant a lot for me since.

## Krisztina Gyureskó



I was born on February 2, 1991 in Budapest. I had a troubled childhood: my dad used all the money for booze and we had trouble paying the rent. After a year, my parents separated and we couldn't pay the rent, so we had to move. We got no help from anybody; we had to get through this alone. Later, I met a boy and he showed me where the drop-in centers are in town. He told me about *The City is For All*, and he took me there. I liked everyone, though the whole thing was weird at the beginning. Now that it's coming to an end I'm attached to everyone.

## Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi



I was born in district II in Budapest. I have a degree in cultural anthropology; my interests revolve around urban society and public spaces. I'd like to live in a city where everyone has a dignified home and where nobody is forced to sleep on the street. I joined *Man on the Street* in 2005, and I'm one of the founders of *The City is For All*. I'm currently working on my PhD in New York, utilizing, among other things, the results of this research. I believe that real social change can only be achieved with grassroots mass movements, and that organizing and representing the interests of the impoverished, oppressed and vulnerable are of primary importance. AVM is one of the most important things in my life: this is a very unique group where people who usually don't meet work together for common goals and achieve great things together.



### ***István Petrák***



I was born in district XX of Budapest. I studied to become a mechanical technician. I graduated secondary school in a night school, and took the entrance exam for Kandó Kálmán College of Power Technologies. I did well on the written test, but before I could take the oral part, I was enlisted. The military didn't allow my studies, so I turned towards biology. What's life as such? This became the main question of my research going on for at least 3 years. Then I became interested in evolution, but ethologist Vilmos Csányi had given a thorough answer to this question. Then I became interested in computers. What is it? What's the main point? What's Artificial Intelligence? From that point, it wasn't a stretch to get interested in thinking – in human, in animal and in artificial thinking. This would last till now but... When I became homeless in December 2008, I lost interest in everything. In February 2011, Linda got interested in me, who I am,

what I'm like, why I'm here, and so I got interested in her! We've been friends ever since; she took me to the demonstration in front of the Parliament in 2011. We asked whether we could help, and by the afternoon we'd become AVM protest organizers. The demonstration was successful, and we wanted to stay in AVM. When asked, we were told that a new working group is starting off called *Justice on the Streets*, and if we're interested we should go to the first meeting. We were interested, and still are, continuously.

### ***Jenő Keresztes***



I'm 50 years old. I graduated from József Attila Grammar School, went on to study law, earning my degree in 1982 at the Faculty of Law, Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences. The reasons for my homelessness are still inexplicable to me. A series of wrong decisions following decades of financial security and an acceptable marriage... This process was partly caused by objective, outside issues, but mostly by psychological ones. I've been working for AVM for over 6 months. Why? I could just use a bunch of clichés. For a better, fairer society. For the awakening of the vulnerable and the humiliated. To shake up the amoral intelligentsia and to reveal to them that their immense pride and arrogance is ruining the country. The other side is that I hate violence, barbarism and imbecility. I experience these daily as a resident in homeless shelters. I'm trying to help people

who are avoided, despised. The point of human life is to live for some goal.

### ***János Balácsi, Gábor Takács, Ferenc Sándor, Zsuzsa Szűcs, Csaba Oszvald (from left to right)***



## VI. Appendix

### Appendix 1: *Justice on the Streets* questionnaire

#### Introduction

This research project was initiated by *The City is for All*, a homeless advocacy group, to find out about how often homeless people are discriminated against and in what forms. People who live on the streets, in one night shelters, self-made shacks or tents are eligible to participate in the research. We have around 30 questions and need 20 minutes of your time. **Answering our questions is totally voluntary and we will treat the collected data confidentially!**

#### General questions

1. *How long have you been homeless?*.....

does not know

no response

2. *Where do you currently live/sleep?*

a) *type*

street (underground passage etc.)

abandoned building

shack

tent

one night shelter

other:.....

does not know

no response

b) *district:*.....

does not know

no response

c) *how long have you slept/lived there?*.....

does not know

no response

3. *What is the source of your income?* .....

does not know

no response

**About discrimination in general**

**4. What are three things that you think come to people's minds when they of the word „homeless“?**

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

does not know

no response

**5. Do you think homeless people experience discrimination?**

Yes

No

does not know

no response

**If the response is no, skip to question 8.**

**6. How often do you think homeless people experience discrimination?**

Very often

Often

Rarely

Very rarely

Never

does not know

no response

**7. Who do you think discriminates against homeless people the most often?**

.....

does not know

no response

**8. How authentic do you think is the media's presentation of homeless people?**

*(please give them a mark based on school grades: 1 = not at all authentic, 5 = very authentic)*

1

2

3

4

5

does not know

no response

**Personal experiences**

**9. Have you ever been treated in a humiliating manner because you are homeless?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

**If the answer is „no“ skip to question 11**

**10. Who has treated you in a humiliating manner?**

does not know

no response

**11. Have you personally experienced discrimination because you are homeless?**

Yes

No

**12. Since you are homeless, have you experienced discrimination...**

*(I will list a few areas of life)*

*a, ... in health care institutions?*

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often? .....

does not know

no response

*b, ... on public transportation?*

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often? .....

does not know

no response

*c, ... in the justice system (e.g. in court)?*

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

*d, ... in government offices (e.g. municipality, work center)?*

Yes

No

If yes, where?.....

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

*e, ... in education?*

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

*f, ... in social institutions (e.g. shelter, family center)?*

Yes

No

If yes, where?.....

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

*g, ... by the authorities (e.g. police officers, public space supervisors)?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

*h, ... at work?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

***13. Have you ever had a health problem that was not attended to because you are homeless?***

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

***14. Have you ever been refused by an ambulance because you are homeless?***

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

***15. Have you ever been asked to leave public transportation because you are homeless?***

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

***16. Have you ever been rejected from a workplace because you are homeless?***

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

***17. Have you ever been fired from a workplace because you are homeless?***

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know no response

**18. Have you ever been denied payment because you are homeless?**

Yes No  
If yes, how many times, how often?.....  
does not know no response

**19. Have you ever been refused a service because you are homeless?**

Yes No  
If yes, how many times, how often?.....  
If yes, where?.....  
does not know no response

**Discrimination by the authorities**

**20. Do you feel that the representatives of authorities treat you as an equal citizen?**

Yes No  
does not know no response

**21. Have the representatives of authorities talked to you in a hurtful way since you are homeless?**

Yes No  
If yes, how many times, how often?.....  
does not know no response

**22. Have you been physically abused by the authorities since you are homeless?**

Yes No  
If yes, how many times, how often?.....  
does not know no response

**23. Have you been stopped for an identity check in the past 30 days?**

Yes No  
does not know no response  
If yes, how many times?.....  
If yes, why?.....

**If the answer is „no” skip to question 25**



**24. Where have you been stopped in the past 30 days?**

a) *types of place* (e.g. public space, shelter): .....

b) *district*: .....

**25. Do you think that there is a difference between the treatment of homeless and non-homeless people when it comes to an identity check?**

Yes, homeless people are treated better

Yes, homeless people are treated worse

No, there is no difference

does not know

no response

**26. Have you ever had to live in a tent or a self-made shack?**

Yes

No

does not know

no response

**If the answer is „no” skip to question 29.**

**27. Have you ever been threatened with the destruction of your tent or shack?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

If yes, who threatened you?.....

does not know

no response

**28. Has your shack or tent ever been destroyed?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

If yes, who dismantled it?.....

does not know

no response

**29. Have you ever been woken up by the authorities?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

**If the answer is „no” skip to question 32.**

**30. Why have they woken you up?**

.....

**31. Where have you been woken by the authorities?**

a) *type of place:* .....

b) *district:*.....

**32. Have the authorities ever helped you?**

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

If yes, how?.....

does not know

no response

**33. Since you are homeless, have you been charged with...**

*(I will list a few reasons below)*

a, ... *consuming alcohol in public?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

b, ... *residing in public space?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

c, ... *begging?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

d, ... *rummaging through garbage?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

e, ... *going to the toilet in public?*

Yes No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

**Advocacy**

**34. Are you aware of your human and civil rights?**

Yes

No

Partly

does not know

no response

**35. Do you feel that you can exercise your human and civil rights as a homeless person?**

Yes

No

Partly

does not know

no response

**36. Have you ever filed a complaint against an office or an authority?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

does not know

no response

**If the answer is no, skip to question 39.**

**37. Where (in what institution) have you filed the complaint?**

.....

does not know

no response

**38. What was the result of the complaint?**

.....

does not know

no response

**39. Have you ever been threatened when you wanted to file a complaint?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

Who threatened you?.....

does not know

no response

**40. Have you ever been refused without a response when you wanted to file a complaint?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many times, how often?.....

Where have you been refused?.....

does not know

no response

**PERSONAL DATA**

<b>Gender of respondent:</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>male</b>
<b>Initials of the respondent:</b>	.....	
<b>Year of birth:</b>	.....	
<b>Date of completion of questionnaire:</b>	2012.....	
<b>Place/address of completion:</b>	.....	
<b>Name of researcher:</b>	.....	

## **Appendix 2: Interview questions (sample)**

### **Introduction**

1. How long have you worked in your field?
2. Why did you choose this field?
3. Have you ever spent the night on the street or had nowhere to go?

### **On homelessness in general**

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word “homeless”?
2. Have you had experience with people who live on the streets in the course of your work?
3. What do you think is the reason for homelessness?
4. What do you think is the best solution for people not to live on the streets?

### **Discrimination**

- \* Do you think homeless people experience negative discrimination?
  - 1a. If yes, by whom?
  - 1b. If yes, in what areas?
  - 1c. Can you tell a concrete example when a homeless person experienced discrimination?
  - 1d. How prejudiced are the people working in your field towards homeless people?
  - 1e. Do homeless people experience discrimination by representatives of your profession?
- 2. Do you make a distinction between a homeless and a non-homeless person in the course of your work?
- 3. Do you see any way to reduce discrimination against homeless people?
- 4. Have you ever rejected help to a homeless person in the course of your work? If yes, why?
- 5. Have you ever overridden a professional rule in order to serve the needs of your clients?

### **Residing in public space**

1. What is your opinion about the law that makes it illegal to dwell in public spaces?
2. What do you think is the purpose of this law?
3. Why do you think the fine is so high?
4. Do you think the current conditions are appropriate for enforcing this law?
5. Many people think that this law does not punish a behavior but a social status. What do you think?

### **Appendix 3: *Justice on the Streets* code of ethics**

1. Members of the *Justice on the Streets* research team form a community that holds the following principles to be important: cooperation, commitment, team work and mutual help.
2. Members of the group strive to understand and respect each other's values and opinions instead of judging them.
3. In the course of our common work, everyone should acknowledge their own mistakes and learn from them and from each other.
4. We follow the rules we have established together.
5. It is everyone's responsibility to contribute to the success of the group's work to the best of their abilities and motivate themselves and the rest of the group.
6. Team members strive for nonviolent communication