

The logo for ESAC 26, featuring the text "esac 26" in white on a blue background, with a stylized map of Europe and stars to the right.

esac 26

Preventing homelessness among international students through the work of student services organisations

Prof. Dr. Christoph Holtwisch

Managing Director
Studierendenwerk Münster



Studierendenwerk Münster



A HIDDEN CHALLENGE



**Student life =
opportunity**

Growth. Learning.
Friendships. Future.



**Homelessness =
precarity**

Exclusion. Vulnerability.
Falling outside the system.

Two worlds. Rarely discussed together.



THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Student services organisations in Germany



STUDENT HOUSING

Affordable, secure and sustainable living.



STUDENT DINING

Healthy, affordable and sustainable meals.



COUNSELLING & SUPPORT

Psychosocial, legal and health services for students.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Grants, loans and advice – promoting equal opportunities.



INCLUSION & COMMUNITY

Empowering all students – diverse, equal, connected.



THE HOUSING BOTTLENECK

Demand far exceeds supply.



Studierendenwerke
Nordrhein-Westfalen



HIGH DEMAND

5–9 %

of students receive
a student dorm room
in NRW.



LIMITED SUPPLY

94–99 %

occupancy rate
of student dorms
in NRW.



FEW EMERGENCY
ACCOMMODATION

4 OF 12

NRW student services
organisations offer
emergency housing
places.



CONSEQUENCES



Competitive
private market



Longer search times



Risk of homelessness



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Facing unique challenges on the housing market.



Limited local networks

- Harder to access personal connections and insider information
- Fewer recommendations and local references



Language barriers

- Many listings and contracts only in German
- Communication with landlords can be difficult



Administrative hurdles

- Residence permit, enrollment certificate and SCHUFA often required
- Opening a bank account can be slow



Discrimination & bias

- Foreign names or nationality can lead to rejections
- Perceived higher risk for landlords



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To make internationalisation successful, housing must be a core part of higher-education policy.



1. Better research

We still know surprisingly little about the actual extent of student homelessness in Germany.



2. Investment in student housing

Student services organizations need reliable public funding and better access to land. Support programmes for the construction of student housing are essential.



3. Focus on competitive housing markets

Direct resources to locations where housing markets are most competitive and pressure is highest.



4. More involved universities

Universities must take greater responsibility – starting with early and adequate information and stronger engagement in housing solutions.



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