



## FEANTSA News

- ▶ [Call for Papers – 7th European Research Conference on Homelessness](#)
- ▶ [Call for Papers – European Journal of Homelessness: Open Edition on Aspects of Homelessness in Europe](#)
- ▶ [ENHW Newsletter - Issue 14](#)
- ▶ [EU Citizenship, Homelessness and EU Free Movement – Seminar Report Available](#)
- ▶ [European Report on Quality in Homeless Services](#)
- ▶ [European Seminar on Local Homelessness Strategies 2012](#)
- ▶ [FEANTSA Press Release: Another European Parliament Call for an EU Homelessness Strategy: When Will EU Action Come?](#)
- ▶ [FEANTSA Press Release: Most EU Member States Do Not Ensure the Right to Housing](#)
- ▶ [Housing Rights Watch Conference – Registrations Now Open](#)
- ▶ [Housing Rights Watch Newsletter – Issue 3](#)

## News from the European Union

- ▶ [EESC Own Opinion on Homeless](#)
- ▶ [European Parliament Calls on Member States to Strengthen the European Social Dimension](#)
- ▶ [Eurostat: Youth Unemployment Exceeds 30% in Some Member States](#)
- ▶ [Hungarian Commissioner for Fundamental Rights Achieves Annulment of Criminalising Measures](#)
- ▶ [New Signatories Sign European Charter for the Development of Social and Societal Initiatives in Train Stations](#)

## News from the United Nations

- ▶ ["Hungary's Homeless Need Roofs, Not Handcuffs" Say UN Experts on Poverty and Housing](#)

## News from our Members

- ▶ [Austria: BAWO Demands Ratification of Articles 30 and 31 of the Revised European Social Charter](#)
- ▶ [Barka Foundation Model Exported to Kenya](#)
- ▶ [Denmark: Study Meeting on Sexual Violence against Women in Homeless Institutions](#)
- ▶ [France: Third Evaluation of 115 Emergency Number Activity](#)

- ▶ **Germany: BAGW Creates Guide for Preventing Homeless Deaths During Winter**
- ▶ **Hungary: Refomix Has a New Website**
- ▶ **Ireland: Housing Association Involvement in 'Mortgage to Rent Scheme'**
- ▶ **Ireland: Housing Associations Agree Nominations Protocol for Homeless Persons in Dublin Region**
- ▶ **Spain: Homeless Service Users Release Single**

## Homelessness in the Headlines

- ▶ **France: Paris Bans Begging in Shopping and Tourist Areas**
- ▶ **Greece: Health Ministry Pledges Action to Help New Homeless**
- ▶ **Ireland: Changes to Funding Protocol for Homeless Services**
- ▶ **Netherlands: Utrecht to Allow Homeless Undocumented Migrants in its Shelters**
- ▶ **Poland: A Third of Refugees May Be Homeless**
- ▶ **Spain : « Discreet Squatting » - Homeless Families Forced to Occupy Empty Private Flats**
- ▶ **UK: More Rough Sleepers**
- ▶ **UK: Homelessness in Scotland at Lowest Level in a Decade**

## Publications

- ▶ **Migrants and the Private Rental Sector**
- ▶ **Migration and Volunteering**
- ▶ **Person or Number? Issues Faced by Immigrants Accessing Social Protection**
- ▶ **Report on the Plight of Young Refugees and Migrants in the UK**
- ▶ **Report Shows Persistent Unemployment Intensifies Homelessness**
- ▶ **The Vicious Circle of Social Exclusion and Crime**
- ▶ **Women and Homelessness: A Biographical Pathways Analysis**

Don't forget to check our [Events Calendar](#) for forthcoming events on homelessness.

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## FEANTSA News

- ▶ **Call for Papers – 7th European Research Conference on Homelessness** [02/03/2012]  
FEANTSA's European Observatory on Homelessness, the European Network for Housing Research Working Group on Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion and the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, are pleased to announce the 7th Annual Research Conference on Homelessness in Europe entitled "Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe", which will take place in York, UK, on the 21st September 2012. The [Call for Papers](#) is now available.
- ▶ **Call for Papers – European Journal of Homelessness: Open Edition on Aspects of Homelessness in Europe** [02/03/2012]  
The latest [call for papers](#) for the European Journal of Homelessness asks for contributions that analyse and interpret homelessness policies and practices in Europe. Articles that explicitly address cross-national issues are particularly encouraged. To be considered for inclusion in this open edition of the Journal, papers must be submitted to Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan ([tosullvn@tcd.ie](mailto:tosullvn@tcd.ie)) by the 7th of April 2012.
- ▶ **ENHW Newsletter - Issue 14** [02/03/2012]  
Issue 14 of the newsletter of the European Network of Homeless Health Workers is [now available](#).
- ▶ **EU Citizenship, Homelessness and EU Free Movement – Seminar Report Available** [02/03/2012]

On the 8th February 2012, Eurodiaconia and FEANTSA held a joint seminar with the support of Italian MEP Niccolò Rinaldi and Swedish MEP Cecilia Wikström and the ALDE group. The seminar was preceded by a press conference where Niccolò Rinaldi, Cecilia Wikström, Heather Roy, Secretary General of Eurodiaconia and Freek Spinnewijn, Director of FEANTSA gave opening statements about the issue and answered questions from media. The seminar [report](#) is now available.

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► **European Report on Quality in Homeless Services** [02/03/2012]

The “European Report in Quality on Social Services from the Perspective of Services Working with Homeless People”, produced in the framework of FEANTSA’s 2011 Annual Theme on Quality, is now available in [English](#) and [French](#).

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► **European Seminar on Local Homelessness Strategies 2012** [02/03/2012]

This year, our annual seminar (co-hosted with HABITACT and the EU Committee of the Regions) will focus on funding strategies and building the case for homelessness. It will take place on the 8th June 2012 in Brussels. Themes discussed will include:

1. Planning and budgeting: How to prioritise? This session will include presentations on rethinking service provision, areas to make savings, and how to budget a local homeless strategy
2. Diversification of funding sources: This session will look at the different ways of funding homeless policy such as sharing the costs with other authorities (between cities), organizing business groups into policy goals, and the potential of social impact bonds.
3. Cost-effectiveness: This session would look at how to ensure efficiency of spending on homelessness such as testing innovative approaches before mainstreaming them, using cost-benefit analyses, and showing social return on investment.

The full programme will shortly be available [online](#). Registrations will open on 12th March 2012.

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► **FEANTSA Press Release: Another European Parliament Call for an EU Homelessness Strategy: When Will EU Action Come?** [02/03/2012]

30 MEPs recently signed a statement urging the European Commission to act on the European Parliament’s previous calls for an EU Homelessness Strategy. This is the third time in recent years that the European Parliament has called for an EU Homelessness Strategy. While hundreds of homeless people have died in Europe during the recent cold spell, there has been no concrete action from the European Commission. FEANTSA [echoes](#) the European Parliament’s call for urgent steps to be taken to coordinate policy on homelessness in the EU.

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► **FEANTSA Press Release: Most EU Member States Do Not Ensure the Right to Housing** [02/03/2012]

The Council of Europe’s European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR) released its annual conclusions at the end of January. This year they looked at whether countries live up to their responsibilities to ensure the right to housing. Six of the eight EU Member States that are bound deliver on this fundamental right, failed to do so - France, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia. Only Finland and Sweden met the requirements. Read the Press Release in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [ES](#).

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► **Housing Rights Watch Conference – Registrations Now Open** [02/03/2012]

Housing Rights Watch invite you to [register](#) for the [Housing Rights Watch Conference](#) – Contemporary Housing Issues in a Changing Europe – which will be held in Galway, Ireland on the 20th and 21st April, 2012. Information is also available [in French](#). Readers are encouraged to circulate the conference information to their own networks.

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► **Housing Rights Watch Newsletter – Issue 3** [02/03/2012]

The 3rd issue of the Housing Rights Watch (HRW) newsletter is now available in [English](#) and [French](#). Contents include: criminalization of homelessness and its impact in France and the USA; an examination of the dramatic number of foreclosures and resultant evictions as a result of the housing boom and economic crash in Spain; the conclusions published by the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe regarding the countries who fail to ensure a right to housing.

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## News from the European Union

► **EESC Own Opinion on Homeless** [02/03/2012]

The European Economic and Social Committee has issued an own-initiative [opinion](#) on homelessness, the key points of which are: the European Union should allocate more resources under the Structural Funds to tackling the issue of homelessness, with a particular focus on building permanent housing; the European Union and the Member States should bear in mind that policies to combat homelessness must be based on the right to affordable, adequate housing; the EU 2020 strategy’s inclusive growth dimension must incorporate discussion on wealth redistribution; Eurostat should promote common definitions, indices and indicators on homelessness at EU level and harmonise statistics; the European Commission should set up a European agency on homelessness; the European Commission should develop an ambitious strategy on the issue of homelessness and support the Member States in developing effective national strategies.

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► **European Parliament Calls on Member States to Strengthen the European Social Dimension** [02/03/2012]

The European Parliament recently adopted a resolution condemning the current austerity-driven policies followed by the EU and Member States. The Parliament urged the European Council to take up key recommendations to ensure coherence and increased ambition to achieve the Europe 2020 targets in its decisions on the guidance for the European economy that the Council will take at the beginning of March. The resolution highlights the lack of attention paid to the quality of employment in favour of job creation, and to increasing labour market participation of women, people with disabilities and the most deprived, such as the long-term unemployed. It therefore calls on the European Council to set up guidance on this.

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► **Eurostat: Youth Unemployment Exceeds 30% in Some Member States** [02/03/2012]

[According to Eurostat](#), the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate in the euro area (EA17) was 10.4% in December 2011, unchanged compared with November of that year. It was 10.0% in December 2010. The EU27 unemployment rate was 9.9% in December 2011, also unchanged compared with November. It was 9.5% in December 2010. Eurostat estimates that 23.816 million men and women in the EU27, of whom 16.469 million were young people, are unemployed. Youth unemployment rates surpass 30% in Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain, according to Eurostat. Eurostat figures show that in December 2011, the youth unemployment rate was 22.1 percent in the EU27 up from 21.0 percent in 2010. See more [on the EC website](#).

In response to this situation, the European Commission's [new](#) 'Youth Opportunities Initiative', calls on Member States to work on preventing early school leaving; helping youngsters develop skills relevant to the labour market; ensuring work experience and on-the-job training and helping young people find a first job.

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► **Hungarian Commissioner for Fundamental Rights Achieves Annulment of Criminalising Measures** [02/03/2012]

The Hungarian Commissioner for Fundamental Rights recently appealed to the Hungarian Constitutional Court to achieve the annulment of an ordinance in the local authority of Kaposvár which made taking items out of dustbins illegal. He [argued](#) that such a sanction restricted disproportionately the rights of vulnerable people – including homeless people who used the dustbins as a means of survival – and did not have any grounds in the constitution.

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► **New Signatories Sign European Charter for the Development of Social and Societal Initiatives in Train Stations** [02/03/2012]

Representatives of the following seven railway companies [recently](#) signed the European Charter for the development of social and societal initiatives in train stations: ĚD (Czech Republic), CFR SA (Romania), CP (Portugal), DSB (Denmark), NRIC (Bulgaria), NSB (Norway) and SŹ (Slovenia). This brings the total number of signatory companies to 12. The original signatories are: CFL (Luxembourg), FS (Italy), PKP (Poland), SNCB/NMBS-Holding (Belgium), and SNCF (France).

The network's activities are based on a desire to work together to develop successful social policies regarding homeless people who take shelter in stations. Supported by the European Commission, the signatory companies agree to share the values of their social commitment and to meet periodically to share opinions and experiences. European Commissioner László Andor, responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, was present at the official signing ceremony.

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## News from the United Nations

► **"Hungary's Homeless Need Roofs, Not Handcuffs" Say UN Experts on Poverty and Housing** [02/03/2012]

Two UN human rights experts on extreme poverty and on housing have [called](#) on Hungary to reconsider recent legislation which criminalizes homelessness, and threatens those living in the streets with prosecution that can lead heavy fines or to prison. "People who have no choice but to live on the street are now in danger of criminal sanctions," said the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda. "This new legislation is being implemented in a context in which the economic and financial crises have resulted in a growing number of families living in the streets. Instead of using public funds to assist these families, Hungary is carrying out costly operations to penalize them for their life-sustaining behaviour."

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## News from our Members

► **Austria: BAWO Demands Ratification of Articles 30 and 31 of the Revised European Social Charter** [02/03/2012]

FEANTSA Austrian member, BAWO, has written and [open letter](#) to Austrian Members of Parliament demanding the ratification of Articles 30 and 31 of the Revised European Social Charter on the right to housing.

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► **Barka Foundation Model Exported to Kenya** [02/03/2012]

Barka Foundation has developed services in Poland, the UK and across the EU. They now announce that their model, the "Barka Social Integration Centre" has recently been launched in Kenya. More information and pictures can be found in a [letter](#) addressed to Barka Foundation by the Chairmann of the Kenya Community Association.

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► **Denmark: Study Meeting on Sexual Violence against Women in Homeless Institutions** [02/03/2012]

projekt UDENFOR organised an after-work meeting with presentations and discussion on violence against homeless women in homeless institutions. The authors of the thesis '[Mere end Udsat](#)' ('Over Exposed'), which examines why some homeless women are victims of sexual assaults on homeless institutions, presented their work.

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► **France: Third Evaluation of 115 Emergency Number Activity** [02/03/2012]

FNARS has released the results of its third evaluation of answers to calls made to the emergency number for homeless people, 115, which analyses the data for January 2012 and compares them with the figures for November and December 2011. The results show a small increase in the number of callers not receiving accommodation after calling the number (the total is 53 %).

In order to measure the effect on figures of the « Plan grand froid » (winter emergency plan), launched at the end of January, FNARS paid special attention to the week beginning 30th January. The results, available on the [FNARS website](#), show that the progressive opening of extra spaces throughout the week meant that more callers were found accommodation as a result of their call. However, even if most requests were met with accommodation solutions in the majority of French départements, the numbers disguise a different reality - the number of people who did not go to the accommodation proposed because it did not constitute a real solution, was not adapted to their needs, or was of poor quality (people were accommodated in gymnasia, army barracks and camp sites, etc), which FNARS see as the consequences of a seasonal system of managing homelessness.

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► **Germany: BAGW Creates Guide for Preventing Homeless Deaths During Winter** [02/03/2012]

BAGW, FEANTSA member in Germany, has created a [guide](#) to preventing deaths among homeless people in winter, outlining the legal obligations on the state and the benefits of interagency working to prevent deaths from occurring.

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► **Hungary: Refomix Has a New Website** [02/03/2012]

Refomix has a new, improved website, [www.refomix.hu](http://www.refomix.hu). The Hungarian version is available now and the English version will be available soon.

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► **Ireland: Housing Association Involvement in 'Mortgage to Rent Scheme'** [02/03/2012]

Irish housing associations are involved in implementing a new pilot mortgage to rent scheme aimed at vulnerable households whose mortgages have been deemed "unsustainable" and are in danger of losing their home. A number of ICSH members see this new model as being in line with their housing mission to meet housing need and prevent homelessness. The first owners are in the process of transferring to become tenants of a housing association and will pay an income-related rent. The Irish Government launched the scheme following a report in Autumn 2011 which included a proposal for a mortgage to rent scheme involving housing associations.

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► **Ireland: Housing Associations Agree Nominations Protocol for Homeless Persons in Dublin Region** [02/03/2012]

A nominations protocol has been negotiated between the four Dublin Local Authorities and members of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) in the Dublin region to maximise the number of units for homeless households through a streamlined and efficient nomination process. Certain procedures and timeframes have been adopted to provide clarity and consistency for all parties and it is hoped that these will improve efficiency in the process therefore reducing administrative costs.

With a streamlined process in place reducing the number of voids and ensuring timely nominations and allocations, it is anticipated that this will result in reduced time spent on the waiting list for applicants. It should also ensure that there is clear and consistent information available to applicants regarding the nominations process to housing associations. All parties are committed to good customer service and endeavour to improve the implementation of the process to continually improve the service provided to applicants and tenants. The protocol applies to all new lets and re-lets and will be reviewed after six months.

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► **Spain: Homeless Service Users Release Single** [02/03/2012]

With the cooperation of well-known music artists, a group of homeless service users has released a single "Ni genios ni artistas" (neither geniuses nor artists) as part of a project entitled "Fábrica de Canciones" (Song Factory). An album is to follow soon. The songs tell the users' stories of life on the street. The stories were put to music by Madrid singer-songwriter Rafa Sánchez, who was behind the initiative, supported by FEANTSA member Fundación RAIS and the Obra Social Caja Madrid.

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## Homelessness in the Headlines

► **France: Paris Bans Begging in Shopping and Tourist Areas** [02/03/2012]

The French Interior Minister has issued a series of decrees banning begging around Paris's most popular shopping and tourist spots. He says arresting and fining beggars is crucial to stop foreign visitors being pestered by begging "delinquents" run by organised mafia gangs. Critics, including the mayor of Paris, have called it an attempt to "stigmatise part of the population" and have criticised the dichotomy between "wanting to fight poverty by repression and fines" and the state reportedly not fulfilling "its obligations in housing vulnerable people or providing emergency accommodation."

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► **Greece: Health Ministry Pledges Action to Help New Homeless** [02/03/2012]

Greece's Health and Welfare Ministry has promised to take targeted action to provide shelter for people who are homeless as a result of the economic crisis. The ministry intends to give 400,000 euros to the Athens municipality and another 100,000 euros to the Thessaloniki municipality to find existing buildings suitable for housing "new homeless" people. In addition, Greek authorities have started to create a record of homeless people and set criteria by which someone may be considered homeless, as well as conducting surveys on the support structures that will be needed to house them. Municipalities have also begun to seek spaces where homeless people might receive temporary shelter.

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► **Ireland: Changes to Funding Protocol for Homeless Services** [02/03/2012]

A new system of funding homeless services in Ireland is aimed at ensuring government funding is used for resettlement and longer-term housing rather than expensive emergency services. The bulk of government funding is currently spent on emergency services, but outcomes remain reportedly poor, with many homeless people spending years in emergency beds and few moving on to longer-term accommodation. Funding will now be given to homeless services that place emphasis on housing services. Homeless service providers, however, say they are finding it difficult to source enough long-term accommodation in the private sector in recent years, and that the government should do more to provide affordable and social rental housing.

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► **Netherlands: Utrecht to Allow Homeless Undocumented Migrants in its Shelters** [02/03/2012]

Homeless services in the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands are to begin allowing undocumented migrants to stay in their shelters in so-called "emergencies". This means mainly families with young children and people with serious medical or legal problems.

The city council is also to vote on a plan that, if approved, would allow Utrecht to send undocumented migrants with mental health problems to a national assistance project in Amsterdam from next year onwards. Several special shelter places should also be created in Utrecht for families with small children.

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► **Poland: A Third of Refugees May Be Homeless** [02/03/2012]

"Refugee Homelessness in Poland", a [pilot study](#) conducted by the Polish Institute of Public Affairs and funded by UNHCR, has found that a third of refugees granted asylum in Poland may be homeless and forced to sleep in shelters, empty buildings, train stations or night buses. While there are no official statistics on refugee homelessness in Poland, the pilot study concluded that all refugees are at risk of housing exclusion - lacking either enough income to pay rent and deposits or facing discrimination from landlords.

The study found that single mothers with small children face the highest risk of homelessness.

"The greatest risk of homelessness appears when the integration programme ends," said a co-author of the study, which concludes that the national integration programme does not fulfill its function. "In the space of a year, refugees are not able to learn Polish or acquire professional and socio-cultural competencies necessary to undertake work and function independently in the society," said the spokesperson.

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► **Spain : « Discreet Squatting » - Homeless Families Forced to Occupy Empty Private Flats** [02/03/2012]

A new trend has emerged in Spain as numbers of homeless people increase and as their profile begins to include families, especially single-parent families, unemployed people and young people. These individuals are increasingly occupying empty private properties, as the only solution they have found to having lost their homes. Most squat "discreetly" and would rather not attract media attention, in contrast with protest movements that have used highly public squatting to make a political statement.

One of the causes of homelessness in Spain is eviction. In the first three quarters of 2011, the General Council of the Judiciary in Spain recorded 7,145 evictions in the Madrid region. That number was 3,878 for the whole of 2008, suggesting that the number of homeless people has ballooned in recent years. This is occurring while a large number of properties remain empty. This dichotomy has been the focus of attention from homeless service providers in some areas of Spain.

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► **UK: More Rough Sleepers** [02/03/2012]

The number of people sleeping rough in England has risen by almost a quarter in a year. Figures from local authorities suggested a rise of 23%. The UK Housing Minister has pledged extra funding for local councils to tackle the problem. However, charities have previously criticised cuts to homeless services, and one has called for a law to ensure that councils help all rough sleepers. Housing Justice [draws attention](#) to the fact that figures are highest in areas where housing is most unaffordable.

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► **UK: Homelessness in Scotland at Lowest Level in a Decade** [02/03/2012]

Homelessness in Scotland has fallen to its lowest level in a decade. The country is now within "touching distance" of its goal of ending homelessness by the end of 2012, the government says, although opposition leaders warn that there is still some way to go. There were 20% fewer applications to local authorities between April and September 2011 compared with the same period the previous year. There were falls in 28 of Scotland's 32 councils, with two recording a fall of 56 per cent. Critics still warn of the scale of Scotland's "ongoing housing crisis", however and figures published recently show that there has been a doubling in the number of early notifications to local authorities of households at risk of homelessness due to eviction.

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## Publications

► **Migrants and the Private Rental Sector** [02/03/2012]

This [report](#) for the Housing and Migration Network in the UK explores the needs and experiences of new migrants living in the private rented sector. It aims to fill the gap regarding analysis of the issues arising from the fact that new migrants are largely housed in private lettings, forming an important subsector of the market.

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▶ **Migration and Volunteering** [02/03/2012]

The Portuguese High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue has published a [journal](#) of articles on migration and volunteering, in Portuguese with summaries in English.

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▶ **Person or Number? Issues Faced by Immigrants Accessing Social Protection** [02/03/2012]

A report entitled "Person or Number? Issues Faced by Immigrants Accessing Social Protection" gives a snapshot of 54 cases of migrants coming into contact with social NGOs in Ireland. The report can be downloaded from [www.nascireland.org](http://www.nascireland.org) [More info](#).

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▶ **Report on the Plight of Young Refugees and Migrants in the UK** [02/03/2012]

A report [released](#) by the Children's Society in the UK is entitled 'I don't feel human' and documents the experiences of destitution among vulnerable young people in the country. The report highlights the plight of young people who have nowhere to live and no regular source of financial support. These young people are sometimes forced to resort to increasingly desperate means in order to survive.

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▶ **Report Shows Persistent Unemployment Intensifies Homelessness** [02/03/2012]

The United States Conference of Mayors [issued](#) its annual report on homelessness and hunger in December 2011. The report focuses on the results of a survey issued to 29 cities. The main findings of the survey were: the report found that the increase in homelessness is driven more by persistent unemployment rates than by foreclosures and evictions; unemployment was the biggest cause of family and individual homelessness. Lack of affordable housing was the second biggest; respondents mentioned that Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing was crucial to the implementation of various programmes to address homelessness; respondents mentioned affordable housing as the best way to assist individuals with hunger.

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▶ **The Vicious Circle of Social Exclusion and Crime** [02/03/2012]

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), in association with the Community Platform, has launched a [report](#) entitled "The Vicious Circle of Social Exclusion and Crime: Ireland's Disproportionate Punishment of the Poor". The report highlights causal links between social exclusion, deprivation and crime, and concludes with 15 recommendations on policy and legislative action to address these issues.

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▶ **Women and Homelessness: A Biographical Pathways Analysis** [02/03/2012]

In Ireland, women form a significant, if largely unremarked, sub-group of the homeless population, with the most recent assessment of homelessness in Dublin revealing that 32% of homeless adults (746 individuals) were female (2008). Yet despite the significant (and perhaps underestimated) numbers of homeless women, there has been little up-to-date research these women's lives. As a consequence, homeless women remain largely invisible within dominant discourses on homelessness in Ireland, with accounts of their lives often reduced to conjecture and stereotyping. This situation is undesirable, not least because it legitimates a perspective on homelessness which fails to recognise the unique experiences and factors that propel women to leave home and/or to remain homeless. This [study](#) aimed to generate an in-depth understanding of the processes associated with women's encounters with homelessness, how they negotiate these experiences, and the manner in which they cope - either negatively or more positively - with their extreme marginalisation. It sought to integrate theory and methods from a number of disciplinary traditions including sociology, social policy and anthropology. The two research papers are now available to download.



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This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>

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