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Don't forget to check the [Events Calendar](#) for events on homelessness in Europe.

FEANTSA News

- ▶ **European Seminar on Local Homelessness Strategies 2012** [03/05/2012]
FEANTSA is co-hosting a [seminar](#) focusing on funding strategies and building the case for homelessness, with HABITACT and the EU Committee of the Regions. It will take place on the 8th June 2012 in Brussels. The [full programme](#) is available, and registrations are open. The deadline for registrations is the 11th May. To tweet about the seminar, please use the hashtag #feantsaloc.
- ▶ **FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch CAMPAIGN - Poverty is not a crime!** [03/05/2012]
On 8 June 2012, FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch will start campaigning against the criminalisation and penalisation of homelessness and poverty in Europe. Because these regulations are usually made and enforced at local level, we want to support local campaigns and organisations working on this topic in European cities.
FEANTSA and HRW will create tools that can help you start a local campaign, or support an existing campaign – including a website, an advocacy manual, examples of good and bad practice, posters, and a research report that will examine the situation in cities. HRW and FEANTSA can also help your organisation find pro-bono support to take cases to court.
Get Involved!
Does your organisation work with homeless people who have been fined, given tickets or arrested for sleeping rough, or being in public spaces 'without good reason'? Please send us any examples you come across in your work. Have your members noticed an increase in the criminalisation or penalisation of homelessness in your city, region or country? We're also keen to find examples of good policies and cooperative, successful practices.
Several European and international networks will be working with Housing Rights Watch, FEANTSA and its members on this campaign. Dynamo International – the network of street workers, as well as the International Network of Street Papers (INSP) will support the campaign. We are still recruiting European and local partners, so please get in touch to get involved.
The campaign will officially start on 8 June 2012 with parallel events in Belgium, France and selected cities across Europe. Please contact samara.jones@feantsa.org if you want to be involved in the campaign, in the launch activities or simply for more information.
Read about the criminalisation of homelessness in France and the USA in Housing Rights Watch's latest newsletter in [English](#) and [French](#).
- ▶ **FEANTSA on Social Media** [03/05/2012]
Follow FEANTSA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) to keep up to date with developments within FEANTSA and on homelessness in Europe.

- ▶ **Housing Rights Watch Conference on Contemporary Housing Issues in a Changing Europe** [03/05/2012]
This [Conference](#), held in Galway, Ireland, on the 20th and 21st April 2012, addressed issues such as: homelessness and housing rights; the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on housing, land and planning, homelessness, disability and other issues; recent developments in EU mortgage law; public interest law and housing; European land law developments; effects of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on housing/independent living/supported housing/consumer protection; legal issues relating to housing and older people; consumer law and housing; developments in rented housing law in Europe and

defining the relationship between law and policy in housing, land and planning in the meta-regulatory era.

News from the European Union

- ▶ **European Commission Report on EU Fundamental Rights Charter** [03/05/2012]
The second Annual Report [produced](#) by the European Commission of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights finds that fundamental rights concerns are increasingly embedded in EU policy-making. The EU Court of Justice increasingly refers to the Charter. The report is part of the Commission's efforts to raise people's awareness of the Charter, when it applies, and the role of EU institutions in the field of fundamental rights.

- ▶ **Ghent Peer Review Meeting Report Now Available** [03/05/2012]
The meeting report of the Peer Review of Ghent homelessness policy, which took place on 8th-9th March 2012, is now available in the public section of the HABITACT [website](#). The presentations and the Discussion Paper are in the Members' area of the website.

- ▶ **HABITACT e-bulletin Issue 10 Now Available** [03/05/2012]
The March 2012 HABITACT e-bulletin consists of five sections: HABITACT news, local news, Europe news, local trends, and a focus on EU migration. See the e-bulletin (and past e-bulletins) [here](#).

- ▶ **Human Rights Watch Calls on Hungary to Revoke Law Criminalizing Homelessness** [03/05/2012]
Human Rights Watch has called on the Hungarian government to revoke a new law that makes it a crime to be homeless. The law raises serious human rights concerns, and is hard to reconcile with Hungary's human rights obligations, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. HRW also stresses that "it defies logic to punish the poorest people in society just because they live on the streets. Fines and jail will do nothing to address fundamental problems that lead to homelessness."

- ▶ **MEPS Call for Dismantling of Obstacles to EU Citizens' Rights** [03/05/2012]
The European Parliament recently adopted a report on "EU Citizenship 2010", highlighting forms of active participation for European citizens. The report highlights important fundamental rights issues: the civil rights of citizens concerning nationality, disability or sexual orientation; free movement of people; integration and non-discrimination of minorities; cross-border healthcare and social security; equal conditions on the EU labour market; mutual recognition of qualifications and mobility of workers; protecting citizens' civic rights regardless of their residence; better access to information by eliminating administrative burdens.

- ▶ **NGOs Send Joint Letter on Food Aid Programme** [03/05/2012]
A joint letter on the European Food Aid Programme, co-signed by EAPN, Eurodiaconia, Eurochild, ENAR, FEBA, FEANTSA, Caritas Europa and the Red Cross/EU Office has been sent to Permanent Representation Social Attachés and to key officials within DG EMPL and DG REGIO at the European Commission.

- ▶ **Social Platform Addresses Ministers on Social Services and Youth Employment** [03/05/2012]
Representatives from Social Platform, the platform of European social NGOs of which FEANTSA is a member, exchanged with Ministers at the Informal meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs in Denmark on the 24th April. They highlighted issues concerning [social services under pressure](#) and youth and employment.
The second session of the ministers' meeting will try to identify new ways to ease pressure on social services, such as making beneficiaries (the elderly, the homeless) more autonomous, increasing the use of wellbeing technologies or using digital solutions for ambient assisted living.

News from the Council of Europe

- ▶ **Protecting Roma Rights** [03/05/2012]
In an effort to combat the marginalisation of Roma people and to contribute to their full integration into society, the Council of Europe has published [factsheets](#) on 'Protecting the Rights of Roma', available in English, French and German.

News from the United Nations

- ▶ **Report on the Rights of Children Working and/or Living on the Street** [03/05/2012]
This [report](#) analyses the circumstances of children working and/or living on the street. It concludes that the actual number of children who depend on the streets for their survival and development is not known and that the number fluctuates according to socio-economic, political and cultural conditions, including growing inequalities and patterns of urbanisation. The report analyses the causes that lead children to the street and the challenges they face.

- ▶ **USA: "Moving away from the criminalization of homelessness, a step in the right direction"** [03/05/2012]
Three United Nations human rights experts on extreme poverty, housing, and water and sanitation [welcomed](#) a groundbreaking federal report in the United States of America which recognizes that the criminalization of homelessness may violate the human rights of homeless persons. The study condemns the criminalization of homelessness and recommends effective alternative practices and policies to reduce and prevent homelessness.

News from our Members

- ▶ **Belgium: Centralised User Information in Brussels** [03/05/2012]
The report on the first centralised count of homeless service users in Brussels, carried out by La Strada, FEANTSA member in Belgium, analyses information about homeless people's experiences of using different Brussels homeless services in 2010. The study was carried out in cooperation with homeless refuges, emergency shelters, Bico Federatie and other FEANTSA members l'Association des Maisons d'Accueil et des Services d'Aide aux sans-abri (AMA) and Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk. The report is available in [Dutch](#)

and [French](#).

► **France: Demonstration in Favour of Joined-Up Housing and Homeless Policy** [03/05/2012]

The thirty-three French associations and federations that make up the Collectif des associations unies pour une nouvelle politique publique du logement des personnes sans-abri et mal logées (Collective of Associations United for a New Public Housing Policy for Homeless People and People in Precarious Housing), coordinated by FEANTSA members FNARS, demonstrated in front of the French Conseil d'Etat on the 29th March. Their demands include:

- An ambitious eviction-prevention policy
- The end of tenant evictions and making compensation available for landlords
- Unconditional access to homeless services all year round
- Systematic support for people in crisis and people who need it
- An ambitious policy for constructing truly-accessible social housing
- The application of the law on the enforceable right to housing

► **Germany: BAGW Against Sanctions for Young Jobseekers** [03/05/2012]

Current legislation on Hartz IV, the programme under which social benefits are given in Germany, jobseekers who reject several job offers can find their unemployment benefit reduced. For under-25s, sanctions are much tougher, however. A first sanction can mean that the young person loses the entirety of his/her unemployment benefit. If sanctioned a second time, the young person's housing benefit may be reduced. This practice comes under sharp criticism from BAG W, FEANTSA member in Germany, who have observed that more 25-year-olds have become homeless in recent years. One reason for this is the removal of their housing and fuel benefits by the job centre, they say. They call for the abolition of the penalty system.

► **Poland: Report on the Diagnosis Phase** [03/05/2012]

The Pomeranian Forum in Aid of Getting Out of Homelessness has produced a [report](#) on the project „Development of Assistance and Social Integration Service Standards”, which intended to harmonise work with homeless people and develop a District Standard of Getting Out of Homelessness. The following partnership organisations (FEANTSA members) were responsible for the outcome of the project:

- Street work – Pomeranian Forum in Aid of Getting Out of Homelessness
- Social work – St. Brother Albert's Aid Society,
- Housing and temporary assistance – CARITAS of the Kielce Archdiocese
- Local Partnerships – BARKA Cooperation Network
- Health – MONAR Association
- Education and employment – Open Door Association.

► **Spain : Caritas Report on Exclusion and Social Development** [03/05/2012]

FEANTSA member, Caritas Spain, has published a [report](#) on “Analysis and Perspectives 2012: Exclusion and Social Development”. Of particular interest is an article on “Vivienda: ¿derecho o regalo? Notas sobre la realidad en el acceso al derecho a una vivienda digna y adecuada en nuestro Estado” (“Housing: Right or Gift? Notes on the Reality of Access to the Right to Dignified and Adequate Housing in Our State”).

► **Spain : fePsh Contributes to Joint Report to Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** [03/05/2012]

The Federación de Entidades de Apoyo a las Personas Sin Hogar (Spanish Federation of Organisations that Support Homeless People), of which many members are also FEANTSA members, has contributed to the section on “housing” of the [Joint Report](#) to the Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which will feed into the Committee's report on the situation in Spain in May 2012.

► **UK: Improving the Health of Young Homeless People** [03/05/2012]

[Research](#) carried out between May and October 2011 and in which more than 380 young people participated focuses on the health needs of young homeless people. A health questionnaire was completed by 130 young people from Depaul UK services, and by a control group of 200 young people from around the UK. The report asks what the main barriers to quality care for young homeless people are and gives recommendations: for policy makers; for health and wellbeing professionals; for people commissioning services and for AstraZeneca, the project's funders and for Depaul UK (FEANTSA member).

► **UK: St Mungo's Want Guarantee Olympics Will Improve Life for Homeless People** [03/05/2012]

With less than 100 days to go until the Olympic Games in the United Kingdom, St. Mungo's, FEANTSA member, has called for a commitment to ensure the games result in improved support for homeless people. The current mayor of London has made tackling homelessness a key focus in the run up to the Olympics, with a target to end rough sleeping in the city by 2012. The charity urges the mayor to ensure that this continues. St Mungo's is calling for faster responses to homeless people's health needs, higher aspirations for homeless people, and a stronger national commitment to funding supported housing for homeless people.

In related news, Shelter, also a FEANTSA member, has condemned the large number of property owners in London renting out their flats or houses over this summer's Olympics, saying that it is “exacerbating” the capital's housing crisis.

This comes at a time when homelessness charities fear that the London mayor has diverted more than £5m of government funding intended to help rough sleepers to other purposes.

Homelessness in the Headlines

► **Australian Research Conference on Homelessness** [03/05/2012]

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute and RMIT co-hosted a Homelessness Research [Conference](#) in Melbourne on the 19th and 20th April 2012. Many of Australia's leading researchers and international experts were present.

► **Canada : Homelessness Definition and Typology Draws on ETHOS** [03/05/2012]

The Canadian Homelessness Research Network has [developed](#) a definition and typology of homelessness intended to improve understanding and measurement of and responses to homelessness in Canada by providing a common 'language' for addressing the problem. Working in cooperation with national, regional and local stakeholders, including people with experience of homelessness, the network has developed a definition that draws on the history of attempting to define homelessness in Canada, but also on effective models from other jurisdictions (most particularly, the ETHOS typology). The result is a definition of homelessness that is uniquely Canadian yet allows for national and international comparison.

► **Czech Republic : Moment of Silence for Deceased Homeless People** [03/05/2012]

Recently, a moment of silence was observed and candles were lit outside the main train station in Prague to pay respect to the homeless people who froze to death in the city. Some homeless people as well as representatives of the groups that help them were in the crowd.

► **France : Evaluation of Homeless Reception and Connection Services** [03/05/2012]

A year ago, centres providing information, assessment, connection with services and assistance for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness were opened in every area in France. The aim of these services is to find a solution that fits the user's needs rather than just allocating spaces according to availability, and to find housing for the homeless person wherever possible. Each user's trajectory through the services should be followed up on and the allocation of places should be transparent and fair. The [evaluation](#) of the first year of the centres' existence shows that real progress has been made, but that provision remains better in some areas than in others. The report also recommends better cooperation with local services.

► **Germany: Too Few Homes for Homeless People and Refugees** [03/05/2012]

In Germany, there are rental conditions for housing associations renting to formerly homeless people and refugees. Six state-owned building societies and some private companies have committed to allowing 1,350 homes per year to respect "protected market" rent levels. Figures published recently by the Department for Health and Social Affairs show that several hundred of these dwellings are missing, however. The main reason given for the promised quota not being met, is the scarcity of affordable apartments in inner city areas, housing companies not making all vacant apartments available on the "protected market", and the requirement for the "social mix" of tenants to be guaranteed. In addition, cheaper apartments change hands less often than expensive ones. However, government sanctions are not planned for housing companies that do not respect their obligations.

► **Greece : Cuts to Mental Health Services Causing Homelessness** [03/05/2012]

More and more people with mental health problems in Greece have ended up homeless, as services have been cut in line with austerity measures. Greece's state-run health care system has been particularly affected by budget cuts, and the mental health sector is among the hardest hit. Staff shortages and facility closures have left many service users stranded on the streets, doctors say.

The Ministry of Health is trying to find more reliable revenue for the mental health centers. The Greek parliament recently voted a new law that forces the institutions to take a percentage from people's benefits or pensions.

► **Hungary: 2012 Statistical Update** [03/05/2012]

As every year since 1999, a survey has been conducted among homeless people on February 3rd, 2012 – usually the coldest night of the year. The research is carried out by experts working in organizations providing services for homeless people. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and is based on the commitment of the homeless services. The data therefore does not cover every homeless person in the country.

The survey reached 8641 homeless individuals in Budapest and 54 other towns in Hungary. The number of rough sleepers seems to have decreased over the last two years – this is partly due to special shelters opening up during the extreme cold, new programs targeting rough sleepers – and not in the least to punitive measures forcing homeless people to hide, even from support workers. In some places, more people were sleeping rough than using a service for the homeless. Two thirds of those sleeping rough live in the countryside. Clearly homelessness is not only a problem in the capital. An increasing number of families risk eviction, or have already lost their homes.

The NGOs involved hope these figures will prompt the Hungarian government to take action and commit themselves to delivering a human and complex homelessness strategy together with other stakeholders.

See the [full English version](#) compiled by Péter Györi, member of FEANTSA's Data Collection Working Group as well as the February 3rd Working Group

► **Portugal: Successful Housing First Project in Lisbon** [03/05/2012]

Begun two-and-a-half years ago in the city of Lisbon, the Housing-First programme « Casas Primeiro » has managed to secure housing for 65 formerly long-term homeless people. Its success has attracted the attention of other cities, notably Aveiro, Porto and Cascais. The programme was set up in the context of the Portuguese National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People, launched three years ago.

► **UK : Homeless People Could Benefit from NHS Reform** [03/05/2012]

The Confederation of National Health Service (NHS) providers in the UK has called for the NHS to do more to tackle health problems among people who are homeless. The Confederation, representing all hospitals and providers who treat homeless people, warn that people sleeping rough often struggle to register with a doctor and that many suffer from mental health problems that doctors refuse to treat because of their physical appearance or substance use. Homeless people often end up being treated by expensive emergency NHS services because mainstream services do not cater for them. Rising levels of homelessness and rough sleeping mean that more needs to be done now, says the confederation.

► **UK: Job Support for Prison Inmates** [03/05/2012]

UK prison inmates are to receive specialist support whilst still in prison to help them find work when they complete their sentence. They are to be registered on the so-called « Work Programme », benefit claims will be processed before release, and they will receive support so they can start working as quickly as possible after release.

Announcements

► **Conference on Public Housing: "Europe in Business in Neighbourhoods" - New Cohesion Policy 2014-2020** [03/05/2012]

CECODHAS, the European Commission and L'Union sociale pour l'habitat will organise a conference called "Europe in Business in Neighbourhoods" on the 27th June 2012. It aims to look at the role of public housing in the forthcoming period of cohesion policy. In particular, it will look at why stakeholders should get involved with implementing cohesion policy and preparing partnership contracts between Member States and the European Commission. It is an excellent opportunity for all stakeholders, including those from the homeless sector, to get more information and to network on this important question. FEANTSA produced a [response](#) to the Cohesion Policy package published by the European Commission on the 6th October 2011.

► **Seminar on Homeless EU Citizens Rights in Denmark** [03/05/2012]

On the 6th of June 2012, projekt UDENFOR will host a [seminar](#), organised in the context of the Danish EU Presidency and focusing on homeless EU-citizens rights in Denmark: 'Mellem ret og uret – hjemløse EU-borgere i Danmark' (Between Right and Wrong: Homeless EU Citizens in Denmark). The seminar will be held in Copenhagen in Danish.

Questions on the seminar should be addressed to ([Benedicte Ohrt Fehler](#), Migrants' Rights Officer at Project UDENFOR, Telephone: 0045 2720 3206).

Publications

► **Access to Health Care for Vulnerable Groups in the EU** [03/05/2012]

This [study](#), an overview of the condition of persons excluded from healthcare systems in the EU, by Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) presents the main findings drawn from data collected daily in 2011 in health centres in Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Munich and Nice. It describes health inequalities and the condition of destitute EU nationals living in their own country; destitute EU nationals living in an EU country other than their own and seriously ill undocumented migrants who are not able to access healthcare in their country of origin.

► **Children's Experiences of Homelessness in Ireland** [03/05/2012]

The Irish Ombudsman for Children's Office of Homelessness Services for Children has produced a monitoring [report](#) on children's experiences of homelessness in Ireland called "Homeless Truths". The report is divided into four sections: an "Examination and monitoring of homeless services for Children", a "Consultation with Children with experience of using Homelessness Services", "Children's Experiences of accessing and using the Services" and "What matters to children". In related news, it has emerged that one in seven people who access homeless services in Ireland are children.

► **Housing First** [03/05/2012]

A new [report](#), written by Nicholas Pleace of York University and the European Observatory on Homelessness and commissioned by the Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement (DIHAL) in the French government, presents Housing First and explores its applicability in the French context. The report draws on examples from the US and Europe to identify three broad types of Housing First service. It examines the philosophy and operation of each and to what extent they could help address homelessness in France.

► **Housing Without Kindness** [03/05/2012]

"Husrom uten hjerterom: Kan bolig motvirke marginaliseringsprosesser?" (Housing Without Kindness. Can Housing Counteract Marginalisation Processes?) is a research and development [project](#) dealing with disadvantage in the housing market. It identifies the significance of housing for disadvantage people on the housing market, and how a suitable home can prevent and help to combat the marginalisation of this group.

► **Literacy Toolkit for Homelessness Organisations** [03/05/2012]

Workers in homelessness organisations are often in contact with adults who need help with reading and writing and other basic skills, and thus are ideally placed to identify people who need support with these issues. This [toolkit](#) aims to show how homelessness organisations can encourage literacy and tackle other, related problems cheaply and effectively.

► **Multiple Exclusion Homelessness** [03/05/2012]

The [results](#) of the 'Multiple Exclusion Homelessness Across the UK: A Quantitative Survey' [project](#) provide a statistical account of the nature and patterns of multiple exclusion homelessness (MEH) across the UK. MEH was defined as: having been 'homeless' (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) and having experienced one or more of the following other domains of 'deep social exclusion': 'institutional care' (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals or wards); 'substance misuse' (drug, alcohol, solvent or gas misuse); or participation in 'street culture activities' (begging, street drinking, 'survival' shoplifting or sex work).



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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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