



**FEANTSA**  
Flash Newsletter  
May 2012

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

### FEANTSA News

#### ► ETHOS in Finnish [31/05/2012]

ETHOS, the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, is now available in [Finnish](#).

#### ► European Research Conference: Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe – Programme and Registrations [31/05/2012]

Registrations are open for the European Research Conference on "Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe". The Draft Programme is available. The conference will be held on the 21st September 2012 at the University of York, United Kingdom. For more information and to register, please consult the FEANTSA Research [website](#).

#### ► European Seminar on Local Homelessness Strategies 2012 [31/05/2012]

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 [programme](#) includes: Planning and budgeting; How to prioritise; Diversification of funding sources; Cost-effectiveness. Information about the [speakers](#) is also available online.

This year's seminar will be on Twitter! Participants and interested parties are invited to tweet about the seminar, and to follow the twitter feed, using the hashtag **#feantsaloc**. There will be screens at the venue showing the feed.

A series of videos will be shown during the lunchbreak, exploring different aspects of homelessness.

During the morning, a press corner will mark the launch of the European Campaign "Poverty is Not a Crime!" against the criminalisation of homelessness.

#### ► FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch Campaign - Poverty is Not a Crime! [31/05/2012]

On 8th June 2012, FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch will launch a campaign against the criminalisation and penalisation of homelessness and poverty in Europe, called "Poverty is Not a Crime!".

The campaign will be officially launched on the 8th June 2012 with parallel events in Belgium, France and selected cities across Europe. Please contact [samara.jones@feantsa.org](mailto:samara.jones@feantsa.org) if you want to be involved in the campaign, in the launch activities or simply for more information.

#### ► FEANTSA and Spanish Federation Sign Joint Civil Society Statement on Access to Health Care Services for Undocumented Migrants in Spain [31/05/2012]

The Spanish government has issued a Royal Decree-Act 16/2012 which, among other measures, restricts the level of health care access for irregular migrants stipulated in the Foreigners Act (Ley de Extranjería). The current Foreigners Act establishes that irregular migrants registered at the municipality are entitled to access health care under the same conditions as nationals of the country. The proposed new legislation would limit access to vital health care services for irregular migrants in Spain to emergency care, maternity and child care only. FEANTSA and its Spanish members have signed a joint statement, led by PICUM, along with other NGOs, opposing article 3 ter. of Section I of the Royal Decree-Act, which denies undocumented migrants the right to access healthcare services. The statement exists in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

### News from the European Union

#### ► 11th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty Addresses Homelessness [31/05/2012]

The theme for the 11th European [meeting](#) of People Experiencing Poverty was "Homelessness and Housing Rights in the Context of the Crisis". The event brought together over 150 delegates (people with direct experience of poverty and/or homelessness) to reflect on this theme under three headings: the impact of the crisis, practice examples and policy recommendations. It was steamed live at <http://webcast.ec.europa.eu>.

#### ► Campaign: EU Money for Poverty Reduction NOW! [31/05/2012]

EAPN and members, FEANTSA, Caritas Europa, ENAR, Eurochild, Eurodiaconia, AGE Platform, the Salvation Army, plus Social Platform, Solidar, EWL, EDF, EASPD, ICSW Europe, Workability Europe and IFSW Europe [call](#) on EU leaders to respect the commitment they made when agreeing the EU poverty-reduction target and urge them to invest EU Money for poverty reduction by:

- Allocating at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy budget to the European Social Fund (ESF)
- Earmarking at least 20% of the European Social Fund to poverty reduction and social inclusion.

Support the campaign for 20% allocation of the European Social Fund for social inclusion and poverty reduction by [signing the petition](#).

#### ► National Reform Programmes – Homelessness Emerging as a Priority [31/05/2012]

Europe has set a target to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. The poverty target is one of [five key targets](#) set in 2010 as part of the European Union's economic and employment strategy for this decade (Europe2020), a strategy to be delivered through annual National Reform Programmes (NRPs) which are based on [10 broad guidelines](#) for economic and employment policies. There is a guideline on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty. It seems homelessness is a priority in the NRPs for the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Finland, Hungary, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK.

### News from the United Nations

► **Spanish Austerity Measures “Disproportionate”, Says UN** [31/05/2012]

In a resolution, the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has called the measures adopted against the effects of the crisis by the Spanish government “disproportionate”. According to the resolution, the measures taken affect “disproportionately the possibility of disadvantaged and marginalized people and groups access their rights, especially poor people, women, children, people with disabilities, unemployed adults and young people, older people, travelers, migrants and asylum seekers”.

The UN is also concerned by the “situation” experienced by people who “find themselves overwhelmed by housing costs, after having taken out long-term mortgages”. The UN suggests “introducing legislative reforms that regulate the giving up of housing in order to pay off a mortgage, so that this option is not at banks’ discretion”.

The UN expects Spain to adopt an “official definition of the term “homeless person”, as a basis for collecting data on the number of homeless people and so that the State may evaluate the change in the situation with regards to homelessness and adopt appropriate measures.”

## News from our Members

► **Belgium: AMA Research on Homeless Families** [31/05/2012]

AMA, the Association des Maisons d’Accueil et des Services d’Aide aux Sans-abri (Association of Shelters and Homeless Services) led a year-long study working with social workers in homeless shelters but also with parents and children who live in homeless services in Belgium, called “Homeless Families: What Support Do Children and Families Receive in Homeless Services?”. The report produced presents the state of affairs with regards to professional practice and comparisons, as well as an analysis of the key factors necessary to break the cycle of exclusion experienced by these families. The study can be downloaded on the [AMA website](#).

► **Spain: Fundación San Martín de Porres Celebrates 50 Years** [31/05/2012]

The Fundación San Martín de Porres celebrates 50 years of providing services to homeless people this year. There will be a series of activities running throughout the year, such as a photo exhibition, concerts, academic discussions, and several publications will be released, including a book documenting the history of the foundation, a catalogue of the artistic activities carried out in the DentroFuera art space and a report on “The Role of the Media in Combating Homelessness”, which analyses the news gathered by the website [www.noticiaspsh.org](http://www.noticiaspsh.org), run by Fundación San Martín de Porres.

► **UK: Virtual Option Trial for Street Papers** [31/05/2012]

Homeless vendors are to sell “virtual” editions of the Big Issue magazine as part of a six month experiment. Under the initiative, vendors will offer their customers the choice between a traditional magazine, and a digital code which will let them access a copy of their local magazine online. The project will initially operate in Manchester, UK.

## Homelessness in the Headlines

► **France: Housing Minister Extends Emergency Shelter Provision** [31/05/2012]

The new French Housing Minister has announced that extra homeless services opened in the winter will remain open for longer, in order to ensure that “noone will have to go back on the streets” - until the shelters close on the 31st May. The shelters usually close in March but were kept open by the previous government in the run-up to the recent presidential elections. The new Minister put back the date even further, calling it her first decision in office. At the request of the Minister, FEANTSA member, FNARS, [conducted a survey](#) of the places set to close. Some French associations have estimated that between six and ten thousand shelter spaces will need to stay open so that the Minister's promise of “noone going back on the streets” is actually kept, others have pointed out that “having nowhere to sleep on the 1st June is just as unfair as having nowhere to sleep on the 30th May”.

► **Germany: Homelessness Fallen 80% in North Rhine-Westphalia** [31/05/2012]

In 1975, there were 86,144 single homeless people in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Of that number, 6561 people had a family. Homeless services were often located on the outskirts of town, and having to declare one’s address there was a stigma, which made looking for a job and for housing almost impossible.

Today, almost forty years later, the situation has changed. 16.000 people are homeless in NRW today – a reduction of over 80 percent. Never since the Second World War has the number of homeless people been as low as it is now.

Thomas Specht, the manager of BAGW (a FEANTSA member) explains why: “compared with other German provinces, NRW has always invested in the building of social housing and is effective in the area of homelessness prevention. Many areas have a homeless support network and advice and help services for homeless people or for people at risk of homelessness. This network in NRW is very tight-knit and that is clear to see in the statistics.”

► **Greece: Doctors of the World Helping the Destitute** [31/05/2012]

The number of poor people in Greece without access to medical care is on the rise in Greece, and the NGO Doctors of the World has warned the economic crisis is taking its toll on people's health. Most of the people in need of help are migrants, but a growing number of Greeks depend on aid from the Doctors of the World. Most Greeks who request the group's help are either unemployed, retired or families that can no longer afford their children's vaccinations. Social funding is not available and many people are forced to pay their own medical bills up front, before being partially reimbursed.

► **Ireland: Young Adults Leaving Care to Receive Help with Housing** [31/05/2012]

Young adults leaving State care institutions in Ireland will receive preferential treatment on council housing lists. A new inter-agency group will develop an implementation plan on what happens after care, and look at linking up with children's services and draw up joint protocol with housing authorities.

► **Italy: More Homeless People Needing Assistance** [31/05/2012]

The association giving legal advice to homeless people in Italy, Avvocati di Strada, has recorded an increase

in the numbers of people requesting its help in 26 cities. It attributes this increase to the effects of the crisis. In 2011, 2,360 voluntary practices were opened. This number was 2,212 in 2010. According to a spokesperson from Avvocati di Strada, the crisis has further weakened the most vulnerable groups and has created new ones. Most people asking for help from the street lawyers are non-Italians (1,392 practices are open for them, 59% of the total), but more and more Italians are asking for help too: "732 last year, 31% of the total». Half of all cases the association deals are about asylum documents, expulsion orders, political asylum cases, humanitarian protection, family reunification and citizenship.

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► **UK: Homeless Strategy for Northern Ireland** [31/05/2012]

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has launched its new [Homelessness Strategy 2012-2017](#). The strategy aims to eliminate long-term homelessness and rough sleeping across Northern Ireland by 2020. A key strategy objective is "to place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery". The strategy acknowledges that holistic assessment of the needs of a person at risk of homelessness is key to delivering targeted interventions from a range of services. The importance of a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach, involving all relevant organisations to deliver employment, health and financial support and welfare services, is stressed. Progress will be monitored using a range of performance indicators.

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► **UK: More People Using Food Banks** [31/05/2012]

Britain's leading food bank network, the Trussell Trust has seen a rise in the number of people needing emergency food parcels. The number of people to whom it had issued emergency food parcels had doubled in the last 12 months and was set to increase further as rising living costs, decreasing incomes and welfare cuts take effect, the trust said in its annual report. Two food banks a week opened up in the UK over the last 12 months to meet an explosion in demand.

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► **UK: Welsh Government Plans to End Family Homelessness by 2019** [31/05/2012]

The Welsh government has [released](#) a [white paper](#) laying out plans to reform the housing system in the country. Plans include combating homelessness, increasing the supply of new homes and forcing stricter controls upon landlords. Another main aim of the plans is to end family homelessness by 2019.

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## Announcements

► **PESSIS Project Final Conference: Involving Social Service Employer Organisations in Social Dialogue** [31/05/2012]

The final conference of the PESSIS ("Promoting employers' social services organisations in social dialogue") project, co-financed by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, will take place on the 22nd June 2012 at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels.

The project aims at a better understanding of how social dialogue is organised and structured (or not) in the social sector in Europe. The objective is to contribute to the development and promotion of social dialogue in the social service sector, and include not-for-profit employers as key actors. To achieve this, a mapping exercise has been carried out across 11 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, UK).

The Conference will present the European Summary Report on social dialogue and collective bargaining in the social services sector, combining the 11 national reports, and some political recommendations.

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## Publications

► **Homeless in My New Home** [31/05/2012]

A new research study, jointly published by Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland, explores the experiences of homeless migrants in Dublin. "[Homeless in my new Home](#)" documents the experiences of migrants who were sleeping rough or in emergency homeless services in Dublin. The study examines the needs of homeless migrants and the barriers they face in accessing services and sustainable housing. Most of the research participants had been homeless for a long time, and had no source of income, including social welfare. The research was funded by Dublin City Council.

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► **Refugees in Precarious Living Situations** [31/05/2012]

A [survey](#) of refugees living in Rome, carried out Fondazione IntegrA/Azione has revealed that 1700 refugees with leave to remain in the country live in run-down, overcrowded and precarious accommodation in Rome. Some are not lucky enough to live inside, and there are families with children living on the street. Of the 6000 people who qualify for state protection in the Capital 2000 have a place in a reception centre; the others are on a long waiting list.

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► **Report on UK Housing Crisis** [31/05/2012]

The UK Government is "falling well short" in tackling the country's housing crisis, according to [The Housing Report](#) published by the UK National Housing Federation (NHF), Shelter and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). The [second edition](#) of The Housing Report, seeks to establish whether the UK Government's approach to housing is succeeding. It sets out what ministers and officials have said they will do to tackle the housing crisis - and assesses to what extent they have achieved their stated objectives. The report says the government is failing on five of its 10 key indicators: affordability of the private rented sector, help with housing costs, homelessness, housing supply and overcrowding.

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► **Study on Link Between Brain Injury and Homelessness** [31/05/2012]

A [study](#) conducted by The Disabilities Trust Foundation in the UK has found that almost half of homeless people have a brain injury. The vast majority of them confirmed they had their first injury before they became homeless. The Trust now wants to work with councils and housing associations to support homeless people with these injuries.



**The FEANTSA Flash is supported by  
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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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