



**FEANTSA**

Flash  
July 2012

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Don't forget to check the [Events Calendar](#) with details of events on homelessness in Europe

## FEANTSA News

- ▶ **ENHW Newsletter and LinkedIn Group** [27/07/2012]  
The [Summer 2012 edition](#) (n°15) of the ENHW Newsletter is now online. The ENHW is a free initiative. Anyone can send articles or information for inclusion in future issues or relevant events. If you know of colleagues who you think would be interested, please pass on the newsletter to them. The network is now on LinkedIn as well. Everyone can join the [group](#).
- ▶ **FEANTSA Interviewed by Social Innovation Europe** [27/07/2012]  
Social Innovation Europe, a body that aims to build and streamline the social innovation field in Europe, recently [interviewed](#) FEANTSA Policy Officer Ruth Owen on social innovation and homelessness. Ms Owen presents the FEANTSA [guide](#) to social innovation, giving its key message - that homelessness is an important thematic priority for social innovation – and exploring particular innovations that have the potential to be scaled up in Europe, such as Housing First. She also explains that the guide coincides with European Parliament and Council negotiations on the EU's future cohesion policy (2014-2020). She concludes by saying that by reaching out to social service providers, promoters of social innovation can help ensure that they promote credible innovation and dramatically increase the prospect of successful scaling-up.
- ▶ **FEANTSA Response to UNPI Complaint on State Aid for Social Housing in France** [27/07/2012]  
UNPI, the French private landlord lobby, has submitted a complaint to the European Commission against the French social housing sector claiming that it is receiving unlawful state aid. This is a new case in a series of cases involving social housing operators in countries such as Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden. These cases use state aid legislation to argue that social housing policies and operators should work with the poorest parts of the population in order to qualify as services of general interest and if they do not do this, they should operate under the same market conditions as private, for-profit housing actors. FEANTSA is [concerned](#) that the superficial quality of the debate on the role of social rental housing will have a negative impact on the public policies for housing the most vulnerable people.
- ▶ **Policy Paper on Youth Homelessness** [27/07/2012]  
It is becoming apparent that in many EU Member States, youth homelessness is increasing. In a [policy statement](#) FEANTSA raises a number of issues which need to be taken into account if youth homelessness is to be tackled efficiently: ensuring a decent income for young people; avoiding budget cuts to social services helping young people exit social exclusion; adequate funding and rewards for employment service organisations which help homeless people find a job; making education mobility affordable and ensuring social protection abroad. Although the increase in youth homelessness cannot only be explained by the increase in youth unemployment, EU Member States will reduce the homeless risk factors if they tackle youth unemployment. FEANTSA thus welcomes EU initiatives taken to tackle youth unemployment such as the Youth Opportunities Initiative and the proposal for a European Youth Guarantee scheme.
- ▶ **Press Release: Dutch Government Policy on Local Connections Bars Homeless People from Emergency Shelters** [27/07/2012]  
Several aspects of Dutch legislation, policy and practice, deny vulnerable groups their right to emergency shelter if they have not lived in the community for two to three years. By excluding homeless people, recovering addicts and migrants, who for a multitude of reasons cannot either prove or sustain residence over the required period, The Netherlands fails to comply with provisions of the Revised Social Charter of the Council of Europe, including the right to housing. Read the full press release in [English](#) and [French](#) and the Federatie Opvang (FEANTSA member supporting the complaint) press release in [Dutch](#).
- ▶ **Press Release: European Commission Reports Growing Significance of Homelessness in the EU** [27/07/2012]  
The latest European Commission Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review shows a rise in

homelessness in many countries because of the economic crisis. Young people and migrants are disproportionately affected. The European Council called last week on the Member States and the Commission to work on adequate schemes to address homelessness. A FEANTSA press release (in [English](#) and [French](#)) highlights the importance of this report.

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► **Social Rental Agencies: An Innovative, Housing-Led Response to Homelessness – Now in French** [27/07/2012]

This Good Practice Briefing, which is now available [in French](#), puts forward Social Rental Agencies (SRAs) as an example of a housing-led innovation in the area of homelessness. It demonstrates that the SRA model has considerable potential to help meet the housing needs of homeless people in Europe.

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► **Still Time to Register for the Research Conference in York!** [27/07/2012]

There are still places available at the [European Research Conference](#) on "Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe". The conference will be held on the 21st September 2012 at the University of York, United Kingdom. More information and registration details are on the [FEANTSA Research website](#).

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## News from the European Union

► **Adoption of SPC Report on "Tackling and Preventing Child Poverty, Promoting Child Well-Being"** [27/07/2012]

The Social Protection Committee has adopted a [report](#) on "Tackling and preventing child poverty, promoting child well-being", which the European Commission will build on when developing the forthcoming Child Poverty Recommendation. The report makes recommendations on housing conditions and housing support.

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► **European Commission Tells Member States to Implement National Roma Integration Plans** [27/07/2012]

A European Commission [report](#) has judged member states' efforts to integrate Roma people to be insufficient. Although all states have strategies to improve the economic and social integration of Roma people, the financial means for achieving this are insufficient. According to a [report](#) published by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the United Nations Development Programme, Roma people continue to be subject to discrimination and social exclusion in EU countries.

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► **Social Innovation Briefing** [27/07/2012]

Social Services Europe, an umbrella bringing together seven Europe-wide networks of not-for-profit providers of social and health care services has produced a [briefing](#) on social innovation.

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► **WILCO Project – Welfare Innovation at Local Level in Favour of Social Cohesion** [27/07/2012]

This is a multi-annual European research project (2010-2013) which is carrying out various pieces of [research](#) on local welfare policies – some of the outputs so far include references to homelessness.

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## News from the United Nations

► **ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012** [27/07/2012]

A [study](#) by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) examines the continuing job crisis affecting young people in many parts of the world. It provides statistics on global and regional youth unemployment rates and presents ILO policy recommendations to curb the current trends. The report shows that the impacts of the crisis have been disproportionately severe for young people, and that those in developed economies have been especially hard-hit. With nearly 75 million youth unemployed worldwide, the youth unemployment rate remained close to the levels it was at in 2009, at the of the peak crisis, and medium-term projections suggest little improvement.

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## News from our Members

► **France: Meeting with Housing Minister on ERDF Funding** [27/07/2012]

A delegation of French FEANTSA members recently met the Cabinet of the French Housing Minister to discuss the obstacles to and opportunities for using ERDF funding for not-for-profit housing projects for marginalised communities. They discussed recent developments having led several French regions to change their operational programmes and the prospect of a new funding regime for 2014-2020. They warned the Cabinet about the risk of unequal regional approaches depending on how the interdepartmental circular on eligibility is interpreted. They also mentioned their fears that the available funds might be underused because they cover a new area that local services are not used to dealing with. They also asked some questions about eligibility.

The meeting allowed the FEANTSA members to gauge how committed the ministerial team is on issues that concern them and in the framework of which a special project has just been entrusted to the interdepartmental delegation on accommodation and access to housing for homeless and housing-excluded people (DIHAL). [More information](#) (in French).

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► **Germany: Standards in Emergency Accommodation** [27/07/2012]

FEANTSA member in Germany, KAGW, have carried out a survey into the implementation of services in emergency accommodation. Based on the results of this survey, they have come up with [recommendations](#) concerning standards in emergency accommodation. They hope to give service providers and front-line workers a tool to help them argue in favour of improving such services. Nevertheless, service providers will have to be realistic in negotiations with municipalities on how these standards are implemented. KAGW has detected a tension between the wishes of social services and the law-and-order approach, which sees homelessness as a threat to public security. KAGW believes it is necessary to illustrate that social services are not about "averting a threat to public safety", rather that this help is necessary and therefore awareness must be raised about this perspective rather than a law-and-order one.

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► **Ireland: Focus Ireland Launches Right to a Home Campaign** [27/07/2012]

Focus Ireland has launched a campaign supporting a legal, constitutional right to housing for all citizens in

need of a home. Research for the "Right to a Home" campaign suggests that 80% of the Irish public support a constitutional right to a home. According to Focus Ireland, the government is behind and needs to [support](#) the right to a home and implement "joined-up thinking" across policies to tackle marginalisation. The charity has been inspired by practices in other European countries, such as England and France, where the existence of a legal right to a home has led to progress being made towards ending homelessness in the countries, thanks to authorities introducing a range of preventative measures in order to secure homeless people with the right to housing.

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► **Spain: Homeless People with Addictions Cannot Access Health Services** [27/07/2012]

FEANTSA Spanish member, [RAIS Fundación](#), recently organised a seminar called "Future Challenges: Tackling the Issue of Addictions and Homelessness from the Point of View of Coordination and Participation". Around forty professionals working for public and private social and health services took part. Several conclusions were made about how to work with people dealing with this particular issue:

- Better coordination between services is needed
- A greater level of specialisation is needed in the different programmes, which should be able to adapt to the people's needs, not the other way around
- Barriers that make access for homeless people to social and health services difficult must be got rid of. Requests for treatment must be dealt with immediately
- Cooperation and alliances between programmes and organisations should be stepped up
- Social innovation and creativity are needed

The seminar was funded by the Ministry for Health, Social Services and Equality as part of its national drugs plan.

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► **UK: London Homelessness Initiatives Shortlisted for Homelessness Awards** [27/07/2012]

Among the nominees for the 2012 Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards is FEANTSA member St Mungo's Palliative Care Service. The awards are sponsored by FEANTSA members the London Housing Foundation and Shelter and the London Councils. A spokesperson said that the six shortlisted projects stood out because of their innovative approach to tackling homelessness.

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► **UK: What Do You Think It Will Take To End Homelessness?** [27/07/2012]

Homeless Link has launched a consultation on the best ways to end homelessness. They encourage people to join the debate on their [website](#) by answering a series of questions. They will use the results of the consultation to inform their campaigning and lobbying work in order to implement effective policies at local and national level.

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## Homelessness in the Headlines

► **Austria: "Austrian Forum Against Begging Bans" Founded** [27/07/2012]

The Austrian [Forum](#) Against Begging Bans was founded at a meeting between begging lobbies and activists against begging bans from Upper Austria, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol and Vienna on the 20th June. They hope that, united, they will be able to lead a stronger combat and coordinated work between regional initiatives and anti-begging-ban personalities in the future. The network hopes to welcome more localities and initiatives in due course.

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► **Czech Republic: Prague Wants Other Municipalities to Pay for Homeless People Who Have Travelled to the Capital** [27/07/2012]

The City of Prague spends 20 million CZK (800 000 EUR) on combating homelessness every year. Two thirds of the homeless people in Prague are not from Prague, but from other regions in the Czech Republic. The City of Prague authorities therefore want these other regions to contribute financially towards combating homelessness in the capital, a move opposed by the regions. The discussion behind this controversy is about who is responsible for paying the costs related to combating homelessness. Some argue that the municipalities should be responsible, but these municipalities reply that they cannot afford to do so. What is more, the official place of residence only serves as an indication of where that person once lived, but does not necessarily reflect the current reality, and it cannot say for how long the person has not been in that municipality.

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► **France: Housing Minister Promises Five-Year Plan on Accommodation and Access to Housing** [27/07/2012]

The French Housing Minister has promised to implement a five-year plan on accommodation and access to housing in order to end the summer/winter dichotomy affecting homeless people. Organisations working on homelessness have said they hope the plan will result from cooperation between homeless organisations and the interdepartmental delegation on accommodation and access to housing for homeless and housing-excluded people (DIHAL). The Minister also confirmed that more housing, including social housing, would be built, in line with an election promise made by the new French President, that rent limits would be set for accommodation in the private sector, that empty buildings would be used to house homeless people and that local authorities would be obliged to include 25% of social housing in new-build housing projects. Homeless activist organisations are somewhat skeptical, and point out that there are also immediate concerns that have not yet been dealt with, such as evictions, demolition of squats and slums and people leaving prisons without housing options.

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► **Germany: Lower Benefits for Asylum Seekers Judged Unconstitutional** [27/07/2012]

The German Federal Constitutional Court has recently judged the basic living allowance levels paid according to the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act to be unconstitutional. It decided that the provisions governing these benefits, that pay €224 a month to asylum-seekers, compared with the normal rate of €374 a month, are incompatible with the fundamental right to a minimum existence as laid down in German law. The benefits were judged insufficient because they have not been changed since 1993 despite 30% price increases in Germany. Furthermore, the way the amounts are calculated is not easy to understand, and it is not apparent that a realistic, needs-oriented calculation has been made that allows the recipient to survive. The authorities must immediately enact new provisions that allow asylum seekers to enjoy a dignified minimum

level of existence.

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► **Hungary: 25% of Population Have Rent, Mortgage and Utility Bill Arrears** [27/07/2012]

A quarter of the Hungarian population, about 2.5 million people, are living in households which have arrears in rents, mortgages and utility costs, [Habitat for Humanity Hungary](#) said in its 2011 report. About 300,000 Hungarians are living in impoverished urban and rural areas, and there are more than 150 slum-like localities in the country.

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► **Hungary: Fundamental Rights Commissioner Condemns Authorities for Destroying Homeless Settlement** [27/07/2012]

Hungary's Commissioner for Fundamental Rights has criticised Budapest authorities for having violated the basic rights of homeless people by demolishing a settlement in a wooded area. The municipality pulled down the makeshift structures without warning and failed to provide alternative accommodation, thereby seriously harming the homeless people's right to human dignity, the Commissioner said in a statement. He called on the municipality to hold an investigation into its action and find a solution to homelessness. [More information](#).

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► **Iceland: City Wardens Assist Homeless People in Reykjavík** [27/07/2012]

According to estimates, there are currently around 120 rough sleepers in Reykjavík. Three so-called borgarvörður, or city wardens, assumed their duties in June 2012 to assist these people. It is a one-year experimental project. One warden is a police officer, the two others are employees of Reykjavík City authorities. The police officer has said that the police know homeless people quite well and that assisting them is "a larger part of [their] work than most people would assume." The homeless people they meet often have addiction or mental health issues.

The wardens are on duty from noon until the evening, taking homeless people to shelters. The wardens see their job as a question of human rights and human dignity. Reykjavík City authorities are currently working on a survey on the number and situation of homeless people, following which a universal policy on their affairs will be made.

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► **Netherlands: Fewer Rough Sleepers in Biggest Cities** [27/07/2012]

Last winter, around 250 homeless people slept outside on an average night. That number is lower than the previous year, when Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht had around 290 rough sleepers. These are the [results of research](#) (information in English [here](#)) into the number of homeless people in the four biggest Dutch cities during the last winter period. Almost three-quarters of the homeless people who sleep rough have no access to public assistance structures because they have not been in the town for long enough, or have not stayed there officially, or because they do not meet the access criteria for shelters. However, no restrictions applied during periods of extreme cold. Police and outreach workers took rough sleepers to emergency accommodation services - which meant that practically no-one slept outside during these times.

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► **Netherlands: Homeless People Encouraged to Vote** [27/07/2012]

Homeless people have the right to vote, but it could be much easier for them to be included on the electoral roll than it currently is. That is the message given by an initiative run by The Hague city authorities, who have put an explanation of how homeless people can register to vote on their [website](#).

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► **UK: London Boroughs Plan to House Homeless Outside Capital** [27/07/2012]

Four London boroughs are discussing plans to lease 150 properties outside the capital to temporarily house homeless families because of high private rents and a shortage of council-owned homes in the capital. The plans have met with widespread criticism.

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► **UK: Tackling Homelessness Key Priority for Welsh Government** [27/07/2012]

Tackling homelessness and eradicating family homelessness are key priorities for the Welsh Government. The new Housing White Paper sets out the Government's plans to combat homelessness and other issues, with greater powers available to them to tackle the issue. The plan is to place prevention at the centre of local authority homelessness duties. The White Paper, which will lead to the Housing Bill in 2013, aims to create a future where:

- Everyone has a home that they can afford and that meets their needs
- Homelessness does not exist
- Homes are in good condition and meet appropriate standards
- Renting is seen as an equally good option to buying
- New models like co-operative housing are a more significant element of the housing system
- People are helped to live independently and support is available for those who need it
- Housing organisations play a greater role both within communities and in delivering public services, and
- There is better co-operation and integration between organisations.

Consultation on the document is open until August 17th.

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## Announcements

► **"6Seconds for Homelessness" Twitter Campaign** [27/07/2012]

There is no shortage of smart ideas for tackling issues like homelessness but there's no time to share them all. The ["6Seconds for Homelessness" campaign](#) will crowd-source a database of links to the innovative people and programmes tackling homelessness today. You send them in, and the Social Innovation Exchange team will write them into a wide-reaching, open database on [www.socialinnovationexchange.org](http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org). To participate, simply spend 6 seconds between 10:00 and 11:00 UTC or 6:00-7:00 UTC on Friday the 7th of September tweeting about the cleverest social solutions to the issue of homelessness, and add the hashtag #6Seconds, or send your recommendation to [info@socialinnovationexchange.org](mailto:info@socialinnovationexchange.org). [More information](#).

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► **Housing First: Challenging Perceptions** [27/07/2012]

[This conference](#) will take place in Glasgow, UK on the 11th September 2012. It is intended for policy

makers, practitioners, service purchasers/commissioners, Housing Associations/providers and community services personnel from the police and the health and leisure sectors. It will explain the Housing First model and how and why it was developed. It will also explore the evidence around this model and the different ways in which the model can be used.

► **Hungary: Human Rights Poster Exhibition** [27/07/2012]

After the presentation of the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Awards (The Ombudsman Award) on 15th June, 2012, an exhibition of human rights posters, organised jointly with the UN Association of Hungary, was opened in the office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights. Numerous international organisations contributed to the exhibition, including the European Ombudsman, EOI, the Council of Europe, FEANTSA, UNHCR and UNICEF. [More information](#).

## Publications

► **Consultation on Housing Support for Homeless Households - Replies** [27/07/2012]

A Consultation on "Housing Support for Homeless Households", carried out by the Scottish Government, sought views and proposals on making regulations on the requirement for local authorities to carry out an assessment for housing support for certain homeless applicants, or those who are threatened with homelessness, and to provide any necessary housing support. The [results](#) are now available.

► **Homeless People Face Hardship in Private Rental Sector** [27/07/2012]

Homeless people in the UK put into accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS) often have to go without heating, electricity or food to provide for their children, a [report](#) has found. Homelessness charities Shelter and Crisis have released interim findings from a three-year study into the experiences of homeless people in the PRS. It comes as increasing numbers of homeless people are being placed in the PRS in the UK, with numbers likely to go up as local authorities make use of new powers that allow them to discharge their homelessness duty by placing people with private landlords. The project has so far interviewed 171 homeless people recently settled in the PRS between April and October 2011. The final report will be published in summer 2013.

► **The State of Homelessness in America 2012** [27/07/2012]

[The State of Homelessness in America 2012](#) examines homelessness between 2009 and 2011 in the USA, which was a period of economic downturn in the nation. The report shows that despite the bad economy, homelessness decreased by 1% during this period, probably thanks to significant investment of federal resources to prevent homelessness and quickly re-house people who did become homeless. The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program was a \$1.5 billion federal effort to prevent a recession-related increase in homelessness. It built upon work at the federal level and in jurisdictions across the nation to improve the homelessness system by adopting evidence-based, cost effective interventions. However, despite the fact that the number of homeless people remained essentially unchanged between 2009 and 2011, there is much reason for concern. As this report points out, economic and demographic indicators linked to homelessness continue to be troubling.



**The FEANTSA Flash is supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).**

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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