



**FEANTSA**

Flash  
August 2012

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Check the [Events Calendar](#) for events on homelessness across Europe

## FEANTSA News

- ▶ **Annual Conference on the Conditions of Homeless Migrants – Registrations Open** [31/08/2012]  
FEANTSA will host its annual conference on the 16th November 2012, with around 300 participants expected. The [conference](#) will take place in Barcelona (Spain) on the following theme: "Existing in Limbo: the conditions of homeless migrants in the EU". The programme is [available](#) and [registrations](#) are open.
- ▶ **FEANTSA Heads Social Services Europe Presidency** [31/08/2012]  
From July 2012 until January 2013, FEANTSA will hold the presidency of [Social Services Europe](#), an umbrella bringing together seven Europe-wide networks of not-for-profit providers of social and health care services.
- ▶ **Joint Hearing on Health Inequalities, Mental Health and Homelessness** [31/08/2012]  
2013 will be the European Year of Citizens, and yet the programme of the year fails to acknowledge the deep inequalities still present in EU Member States and the exclusion of certain groups. Therefore, Mental Health Europe and FEANTSA will hold a European Parliament [hearing](#) on the 13th November on inclusive citizenship from the point of view of homeless people with mental health problems. The hearing, hosted by Kinga Göncz MEP and featuring speakers from the World Health Organization and the European Commission, will raise awareness about the discrimination and lack of access to health care often experienced by this group and the discussion will centre on tools to prevent mental health problems in persons who are homeless. The hearing will underline the idea that the 2013 European Year cannot be developed in a vacuum – active citizenship depends on active inclusion, and a fair democratic society cannot be achieved without the guarantee of a minimum standard of living. If you wish to attend, please [register](#) by the 21st October.
- ▶ **Research Conference – Only a Few Spaces Left!** [31/08/2012]  
There are still a few places available at the [European Research Conference](#) on "Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe" – those interested are advised to register now to avoid disappointment. A new plenary speaker has been confirmed – Professor Isobel Anderson of the University of Sterling. 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](#). All speakers' biographies and maps to the venue are now online.
- ▶ **Social Innovation Guide Now in French** [31/08/2012]  
FEANTSA's publication, "Social Innovation to Combat Homelessness: A Guide", which makes the case that homelessness is an important thematic priority for social innovation, and suggests areas of focus where social innovation can support the fight against homelessness in the EU, is now available [in French](#).
- ▶ **News from the European Union**
- ▶ **DG Employment Starts Homelessness Mapping Exercise** [31/08/2012]  
The European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) has started a homelessness mapping exercise to analyse the extent of homelessness and homeless services available in Europe and has sent out a questionnaire to all members of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) on homelessness, homeless policies and homeless services in their countries, with a special focus on the impact of the crisis. The reports should be ready at the beginning of October.
- ▶ **European Commission to Reinforce Social Aims of 2020 Strategy** [31/08/2012]  
The European Commission has said it will publish a social investment package in order to "safeguard, develop and adapt human capital under the constraints of limited public finances and increased economic dependencies, and contribute to the headline target of reducing poverty and creating growth, cohesion and welfare". The Commission has confirmed that discussions are under way regarding the content, form and timing of this initiative.
- ▶ **S&D Call for a European Homelessness Strategy in 2013** [31/08/2012]

The Socialist and Democrat group of MEPs in the European Parliament have issued a [Resolution](#) on the European Commission 2013 Work Programme, in which they call on the European Commission to present an EU homelessness strategy, addressing, amongst others, the problem of female poverty and minimum pension schemes.

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## News from the United Nations

### ► France Must Make Sure Roma Evictions Not Result of Discrimination, Says UN [31/08/2012]

A group of independent United Nations human rights experts have [urged](#) the French Government to ensure compliance with international non-discrimination standards when dismantling Roma settlements and expelling Roma migrants. A number of evictions and expulsions have been documented by non-governmental organizations and the media, and seem set to continue, according to a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Forced eviction is not an appropriate response and alternative solutions should be sought that conform with human rights standards," said the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik. "Legal safeguards must be in place, including the provision of adequate housing alternatives to ensure that individuals, particularly children, women and those with illnesses or disability, are not left homeless or vulnerable." The Special Rapporteur on racism, Mutuma Ruteere, warned that "these evictions and expulsions are inevitably fuelling the already worrying climate of hostility against Roma in France," and highlighted the importance of enhancing the efforts to tackle marginalization of Roma in the sphere of housing and employment and facilitating their social inclusion. Similar actions against the Roma people in France were undertaken in August 2010 and met widespread European and international criticism, including from [FEANTSA](#). This time, ENAR, the European Network Against Racism, has sent an [open letter](#) to the Vice-President of the European Commission and the French Prime Minister to urge them to end discrimination against Roma people in Europe, including in terms of housing.

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## News from our Members

### ► Belgium: CPAS de Charleroi Asks for More Water Fountains in Towns [31/08/2012]

The CPAS de Charleroi has highlighted that, contrary to popular belief, the summer months are a very difficult time for homeless people, not least because it is very difficult to find water and there are very few public fountains in large cities. They have therefore asked that public water fountains be built in all towns.

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### ► Denmark: Report on Homeless Migrants in Copenhagen [31/08/2012]

projekt UDENFOR was recently given the task by the city of Copenhagen to describe a relatively new and undocumented phenomenon in Denmark - homelessness among EU-migrants. It has produced a [report](#) based on projekt UDENFOR's experiences and empirical data obtained by interviews with employees in 15 different church, private or publicly-funded social facilities and services working with homeless people. One of the conclusions of the report is that homeless migrants are a diverse group in terms of their problems and needs and that various measures must be implemented in the future social work to reach the diversity of homeless migrants. The report consists of two parts: Part 1 focuses on homeless migrants' problems and needs and roughly divides the homeless into two subcategories, homeless migrant workers and particularly vulnerable homeless migrants. Part 2 makes proposals for future measures at municipal-, national- and EU-level that could contribute to a long-term and sustainable solution to the problem for these two groups.

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### ► France: Even Less Help from Emergency Accommodation Than in Winter [31/08/2012]

FEANTSA member, FNARS, has released its latest monitoring [report](#) on the discrepancy between demand for spaces in homeless services and the supply of these spaces. The report «Vivement l'hiver!» (Roll on Winter!) demonstrates that, in the summer, even fewer spaces are available than in winter, whilst demand is at the same level. In the summer, homeless services close and the winter block on evictions is lifted. Some local authorities on the coast even ordered homeless services to be shut, claiming that they "spoiled the image of the local seaside resorts". FNARS [calls for](#) the 2,500 places that have recently been closed to be reopened and for more provision to be made in areas where the need is greatest.

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### ► France: Regionally-Adapted Solutions Should Be Constructed in Consultation with Roma Populations [31/08/2012]

FNARS, French FEANTSA member, and RomEurope issued a joint [press release](#) to accompany the French government's interministerial meeting on Roma integration. The press release insists that services for Roma people and measures to aid their integration should be without stigmatisation, should respect Roma rights and that adapted solutions should be striven for. To this effect, FNARS and RomEurope demand that evictions that do not come with an offer of accommodation or rehousing be stopped, that situations be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, that everyone have access to rights such as social protection, education and healthcare including healthcare benefits, that blocks on employment and professional training be lifted for Romanians and Bulgarians. FNARS and RomEurope say that solutions are possible and give several examples of existing projects, including adapted services: creating "integration villages", opening day centres, emergency accommodation, support allowing access to healthcare, administrative assistance, training, supported return, exchanges with Romania and support services on the ground. They say that change can only come if solutions are found in cooperation with Roma populations. This statement comes as news of new waves of evictions of Roma camps came to light. RomEurope also issued a [statement](#) against these evictions. FEANTSA previously issued a [press release](#) criticizing the evictions of Roma and Travellers without solution in 2010.

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### ► Germany: "German Government Ignoring Increasing Housing Need and Homelessness" - BAGW [31/08/2012]

BAGW, FEANTSA member in Germany, have issued a [press release](#) criticising the German government's [refusal](#) to introduce nationwide statistics on emergency accommodation to reflect the scale and development of eviction and homelessness. BAGW argue that the collection of such statistics is necessary and possible and had asked for them to be collected as part of a parliamentary process called a "Kleine Anfrage" (Small Enquiry). They specifically asked for the collection of homelessness statistics to be a legal requirement and

for a representative study to be carried out (the last one was in 1992). They also say the entire scientific community has been calling for such statistics for more than thirty years.

The opposition parties in the German parliament also [asked](#) the federal government to provide better statistical information on homelessness.

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► **Ireland: Focus Ireland Responds to Paper on Housing First** [31/08/2012]

Focus Ireland has produced a [response](#) to a paper entitled 'Ending Homelessness: Towards a Housing Led Approach', prepared by Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan, member of the Core Team of the European Observatory on Homelessness. The paper explores how the Irish National Homelessness Strategy could use the lessons learned from Housing-Led approaches to homelessness. The Focus Ireland response gives a positive evaluation of the paper, and includes general comments about terminology, a section on housing supply, with subsections on policies to increase the general supply of housing (including Social Housing), policies which aim to enhance the capacity of people who are moving out of homelessness to access housing that currently exists, Private Rented Accommodation, Local Authority Housing and a proposal for reform. It also suggests next steps for the government.

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► **Portugal: AMI - Requests for Help Increased in First Half of Year** [31/08/2012]

AMI's twelve social centres in Portugal helped 10,030 people in the first six months of the year, which represents a 10% increase on the number for the same period in 2011. The number is also twice the number of requests received for the whole of 2009. A quarter of the people asking for help this year were doing so for the first time. 75% does not have a professional activity and 74% do not have professional qualifications. The homeless population reached 1,209 pessoas, 6% more than in the same period last year. 6% more women were homeless than last year. AMI says that it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide its humanitarian aid because of the growing complexities and quantity of problems the families that come to them experience. Access to employment, housing, health, education, culture and sport has been made more difficult because of the crisis, says AMI.

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► **Portugal: Companies Sign Protocol to Help Homeless People** [31/08/2012]

Twenty-five companies, members of the Associação Empresarial de Portugal (Portuguese Business Association) have signed a protocol with FEANTSA member Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto, committing to give food and drink that will be distributed to homeless people.

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► **UK: Homeless Families Need Decent Rented Accommodation** [31/08/2012]

Crisis, FEANTSA UK member, has set out [recommendations](#) for rented accommodation offered to homeless families forced into the private rented sector. Crisis opposed moves to allow local authorities to place statutorily homeless households into private rented accommodation without their consent. However, it has stipulated that if councils do use this power then properties must be: in a suitable location; at an affordable level of rent and be accompanied by appropriate support.

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► **UK: Professionals Can Join the "Rebuilding Shattered Lives" Campaign** [31/08/2012]

St Mungo's Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign is a national 18 month campaign to raise awareness of women's homelessness, to showcase good practice and innovation and, ultimately, to improve services and policy for the future. Professionals who [get involved](#) have an opportunity to showcase their work to a range of sectors, gain access to free resources, access members-only events, give their female service users the chance to say what works and connect with other professionals and experts.

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## Homelessness in the Headlines

► **Austria: Housing First in Vienna** [31/08/2012]

A new project run by the Vienna Salvation Army, called "Mobile Wohnbegleitung" (Mobile Housing Support) provides formerly homeless people with help and support in their own homes. The project is part of the new Viennese homeless policy and is an example of a housing-led approach to homelessness. Homeless people who were in temporary accommodation will move into their own home and receive support from social workers.

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► **Belgium: « Miss Homeless » Evicted from Her New Home** [31/08/2012]

In 2009, FEANTSA [criticised](#) a beauty pageant for homeless women of which the prize was a year rent-free in a flat. FEANTSA maintained that housing was a fundamental human right, not a prize and that it was unethical to place vulnerable people in public competition with each other to "win" their human rights. It has now come to light that the competition winner has been evicted from her house because she was unable to pay the €600 rent that ensued after a year - because of the high price of the energy bills the competition organisers would not pay. These bills were driven up by the fact that the competition organisers sent other homeless people to stay with her. They used the gas and electricity she was then expected to pay for on her own.

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► **Czech Republic: Social Housing to Be Earmarked for Homeless People** [31/08/2012]

The process of privatisation of social housing in Ostrava has been suspended following an emotional response from local people. The sale of public housing to cooperative ownership, when completed, is expected to leave fifteen thousand social rental apartments in the city. Of these, about six thousand would be earmarked for social housing for homeless people trying to reintegrate into society, but also for the elderly or single mothers.

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► **Ireland: Social Housing for Homeless People** [31/08/2012]

The Irish government has allocated funds to provide around 808 social houses through local authorities and voluntary housing bodies for the next two years. They will largely be used to house homeless people, elderly people and people with disabilities.

The Housing Minister said that the "much-reduced capital budget available [should be] targeted at those most in need."

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► **Spain: Doctors Sign Manifesto “We Will Continue to Treat Irregular Migrants”** [31/08/2012]

Almost 900 Spanish doctors working in public health services have signed a manifesto saying they will “continue to treat” patients whose administrative situation is irregular, thus defying a royal decree that will limit undocumented migrants’ access to universal health care from the 1st September. The controversial measure, adopted by the conservative Spanish government who say the move is necessary to reduce the public deficit and discourage “health tourism”, denies undocumented migrants the right to free access healthcare services except in cases of emergency (illness or accident), ante- and post-natal care and for under-18s.

FEANTSA and its Spanish members previously signed a joint statement against the decree. The statement exists in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

► **Spain: Homelessness Increasing in Spain Because of Crisis** [31/08/2012]

In Spain, unemployment is at 24 percent and rising rent costs are driving more people into homelessness as they can no longer pay their rent or mortgage. Nearly a quarter of Spanish households live under the poverty line. On average, 159 people are evicted every day. Evictions reached a record high of 58,241 last year, a 22% increase on 2010, according to official government statistics. A new law will allow evictions just ten days after the first missed payment.

► **UK: Government Commits to Preventing Homelessness - But Commentators Dissatisfied** [31/08/2012]

The UK Government has just published a [report](#) entitled ‘Making Every Contact Count’, setting out its [commitments](#) to preventing homelessness. The aim is said to be ensuring that anyone at risk of homelessness gets help at the earliest possible stage and providing more support for rough sleepers. It encourages better cross-service working between councils, charities, health services and the police to focus on earlier support for people likely to become homeless. The report also includes a number of [commitments](#) made by the Department of Health, aimed at tackling health inequalities.

However, the report has been criticised by homelessness organisations who have expressed disappointment at the long-awaited strategy. The report was originally expected in May. Crisis, a FEANTSA member, has [branded](#) the report a “missed opportunity”. The charity said the report fails to address the key issues of: lack of support for single homeless people, the impact of welfare cuts and the desperate shortage of housing. The need to build housing was also highlighted by the Local Government Association Environment Board, the body that represents local councils (i.e. municipal authorities) in the UK. Crisis pointed out that the report was released on the same day [statistics](#) were published showing that the number of eviction court orders had gone up 8%, from 93,316 in 2011 to 100,825 for the same period in 2012. The housing charity Shelter called for “clear guidance for councils to record everyone who comes to them for help, in order to prevent people being repeatedly turned away”.

Meanwhile, squatting is to become a criminal offence at midnight on 31st August. Government spokespeople say the law will “protect home owners” but commentators, including homelessness charities, predict that the new law will lead to a rise in homelessness and penalise those who cannot afford to own a home.

## Announcements

► **“6Seconds for Homelessness” Twitter Campaign** [31/08/2012]

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](#). 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](#).

## Publications

► **Addressing the Needs of the Street Homeless** [31/08/2012]

This research (available in [English](#) and [French](#)) studies the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary outreach team (MDOT) in meeting the housing and health-care needs of the street homeless population in Toronto. Before the study, nine out of ten street homeless people interviewed said that they wanted permanent housing, and over twenty-six percent indicated that their mental health difficulties stood in the way of finding and securing housing. By combining housing, health-care and social work expertise through inter-sectoral collaboration, MDOT showcases that collaborative approaches to ending homelessness produced positive housing and functioning outcomes to street dwellers. The study suggested that these services must also be mobile and brought to the street to be effective. At the six months interview, more than two-thirds of the client group was no longer living on the street and only nine percent reported preferring to live on the street or in shelters. There were also obvious improvements in social, occupational and school functioning, and a moderate decrease in drug use.

► **Better Care for Homeless People Could Improve Public Health** [31/08/2012]

Homeless people have much higher rates of infection with tuberculosis (TB), HIV and hepatitis C compared with the general population and could spark epidemics, says a recent international [study](#). Experts said high levels of infection would not only cause yet more poverty and distress for those without homes, but could also have an impact on public health. The research suggests the best way to fight back against these and other infectious diseases was to focus on treating homeless people and preventing them from getting the diseases.

► **Guide for Working with Homeless Migrants** [31/08/2012]

In recent years, there has been an increase in demand for use of homeless services from EU migrants, especially in urban areas. Some services are stretched beyond their capacity or competence and do not know how to deal with these users. Social workers often ask for the needs and requirements for services for this group to be clarified and need to develop their skills for working with these people. To support services and staff, the German Caritas Federation has published a [study guide](#), which clarifies many

questions and gives a lot of information around the daily work with homeless migrants. Technical guidance is given about the EU and citizenship rights are explained. The guide covers issues such as freedom to travel, freedom to provide services, free movement of workers and freedom of establishment. The specific rights and access issues with regard to social benefits are also demonstrated.

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► **Homelessness Simulation Game** [31/08/2012]

A US organization has created a homelessness simulation [game](#) which is quite a powerful communication tool to raise awareness of the general public on homelessness.

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► **Hope In Stations: Final Evaluation Report** [31/08/2012]

The Final evaluation report of the Hope in Stations project (HOMEless PEople in European Train Stations) was published in March 2012. The project brought together the stakeholders of the train stations of Paris Nord and Paris Est, Brussels Central, Roma Termini, Berlin Zoo, Madrid Antocha, Warsaw Central and Luxembourg Central and brought together local authorities, social organisations supporting homeless people and railway companies. The core of this experiment was the introduction of a reference person in Paris Nord and Est, Brussels Central and Roma Termini, who is in charge of coordinating all the different stakeholder interventions in and around the station. The report can be downloaded and read in [Dutch](#), [English](#) or [French](#).

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► **Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care** [31/08/2012]

This research study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the issues facing young people when they leave care. The [report](#) aims to answer three main research questions: What are the needs and circumstances of young people aged 17-18 who leave care in North Dublin? What factors are associated with more positive outcomes for young people? What are young people's experiences of receiving aftercare supports?

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► **Research into Residential and Outreach Support for Homeless People in Flanders** [31/08/2012]

There is currently no clear picture of the scope of available services for homeless people in Flanders. The goal of this [research project](#) is to develop an way of clarifying the offer in terms of homeless services in Flanders (the Brussels Region was provisionally left out of the sample). Preventative and after-care rooflessness and homelessness mechanisms will be studied. The measuring tool needs further development but will allow a full and up-to-date picture to be made of the available homeless services in future. To that end, directives and recommendations have been drawn up on how to use the tool.

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► **Study on People Experiencing Homelessness and Gambling** [31/08/2012]

It is estimated that between 15 and 20 per cent of people experiencing homelessness gamble. A [report](#), entitled "A study of homelessness and gambling in the Northern Rivers Region, New South Wales, Australia: the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness and gambling and the service providers supporting them, investigates the relationship between these social problems.

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► **Toolkit for Schools** [31/08/2012]

A free schools [toolkit](#) has been launched to help children and young people learn about money management and finding and keeping a home. The toolkit, which is available as an online resource, includes an accompanying range of tools giving teachers the means to help pupils plan a stable future.



**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>

**FEANTSA is supported financially by the European Commission. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.**