



FEANTSA

10 Messages to Get the European Semester on Track in the Fight  
against Poverty and Homelessness

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# 10 Messages to Get the European Semester on Track in the Fight against Poverty and Homelessness

*FEANTSA statement ahead of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and  
Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) Meeting on 10 March 2014*

■ European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless AISBL

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## Introduction

On the 10 March 2014, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) will hold a policy debate on the 2014 European Semester. In this context, Social Affairs Ministers will:

- adopt conclusions providing political guidance for employment and social policies on the basis of the annual growth survey for 2014,<sup>1</sup>
- adopt the joint employment report<sup>2</sup> which will be submitted to the European Council;
- agree that the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (MS), adopted in 2010, will remain unchanged for 2014
- adopt conclusions on the social situation in the EU<sup>3</sup>, and
- take note of a communication that the Commission adopted on 5 March on the EU 2020 headline targets<sup>4</sup>

FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) takes this opportunity to present **10 messages** to the EPSCO on how the European Semester can better support the fight against poverty and homelessness from 2014 onwards.

3 annexes to this document support FEANTSA's messages. Annex 1 presents current trends on homelessness in the EU. Annex 2 presents FEANTSA's proposals for Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) relating to homelessness. Annex 3 summarises how poverty and homelessness have been addressed by key elements of the Semester so far.

## Policy Context

In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU adopted its first target on poverty – aiming to lift at least 20 million people from the risk of poverty or social exclusion by the year 2020. The fight against poverty is thus one of the key objectives that Member States (MS) and the EU institutions should strive towards in the Semester framework.

The European platform against poverty and social exclusion (EPAP) is one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth<sup>5</sup>. It aims to support activities and stakeholder engagement to help reach the poverty target, and has focused on tackling homelessness as an important part of its activities.

In 2013, the European Commission published the Social Investment Package, with a view to ensuring the adequacy and sustainability of social policies. It contains guidance to help MS reach the poverty target. This includes the most extensive policy guidance that the Commission has ever provided to MS on tackling homelessness – contained both in the overarching Communication<sup>6</sup>, which calls on MS to 'confront homelessness through comprehensive strategies', and in a dedicated Commission Staff Working Document,<sup>7</sup> which analyses different components of homeless policies in greater detail to provide further guidance.

There is growing pressure from the European Parliament (EP) for the Semester to take more account of poverty, including homelessness. In its latest Resolution on an EU homelessness strategy, the EP called for 'regular European monitoring of homelessness' and for 'the Commission to give due

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<sup>1</sup> [6610/1](#)

<sup>2</sup> [COM\(2013\) 801 final](#)

<sup>3</sup> [6608/14](#)

<sup>4</sup> [COM\(2014\) 130 final](#)

<sup>5</sup> [COM\(2010\) 758 final](#)

<sup>6</sup> [COM/2013/083 final](#)

<sup>7</sup> [SWD/2013/042 final](#)

consideration to homelessness in the Country Specific Recommendations'.<sup>8</sup> In its Resolution on the European Semester and the Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2014, the EP called for the inclusion of additional social and employment indicators, including on homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

The European Semester has a clear role to play in ensuring that MS deliver on poverty and homelessness. This was reflected in the Commission Communication accompanying the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) in 2013, which called on MS to 'pay more attention to combating different forms of poverty' including 'child poverty, **homelessness**, in-work poverty and over-indebtedness'.<sup>10</sup>

## 10 Messages for a European Semester that Delivers on Poverty and Homelessness from 2014

### 1. More ambition on poverty

Since the adoption of Europe2020 in 2010, 6.6 million more people now live in poverty or social exclusion (an increase in more than 1/3 of MS). Urgent action is required in the Semester framework to address this. The Semester should safeguard the EU's political ambition on poverty. In this context, the crisis is a reason to redouble efforts rather than to scale them back. FEANTSA welcomes the emphasis in the Draft Council Conclusions on the Social Situation in the EU on the fact that 'the current situation requires stronger resolve to stay on course with Europe 2020 strategy and strive to deliver on the target'.<sup>11</sup> However, FEANTSA emphasises that the EU is **not** currently on course as far as poverty is concerned. The total of all the poverty commitments of the MS amounts to only 12 million people rather than the 20 million agreed. In this context, the focus on tackling poverty, including the social consequences of the crisis should be strengthened in every element of the Semester.

### 2. More attention to social investment in social services

The 2014 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) focused on the need for active inclusion strategies, including measures to tackle poverty and broad access to affordable and high-quality services (including social, health and housing services).<sup>12</sup> It also highlighted the importance of personalised services, specifically for vulnerable groups. And yet, the EPSCO's draft political guidance for employment and social policies largely neglects these aspects. In the future, the Semester should provide stronger guidance on the need for social investment in services to tackle poverty, including homelessness.

### 3. Better integration of homelessness and extreme poverty

Extreme forms of poverty such as homelessness are not directly taken into account by the indicators for the poverty target. However, in order to deliver inclusive growth, the Semester must find ways to address them. Otherwise there is a risk of a "creaming" effect that would leave behind the EU's most vulnerable citizens. Homelessness is on the rise in much of the EU<sup>13</sup> but is currently weakly addressed in the Semester. The Semester should support MS in delivering on the policy guidance included in the Social Investment Package (SIP) on homelessness. For this to work, better account needs to be taken of homelessness as a specific form of poverty in the context of the Semester. The ongoing work on child poverty and

<sup>8</sup> [P7\\_TA\(2014\)0043](#)

<sup>9</sup> [A7-0091/2014](#)

<sup>10</sup> [COM\(2013\) 350 final](#)

<sup>11</sup> [6608/14](#)

<sup>12</sup> [COM\(2013\) 800 final](#)

<sup>13</sup> See [On the Way Home: FEANTSA Monitoring Report on Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe](#) and [EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review June 2012](#)

Roma exclusion demonstrates that such an approach is possible. The fact that the 2013 Commission Communication accompanying the 2013 CSRs called on MS to pay more attention to combating different forms of poverty, including homelessness, is a promising development, which should be built upon.

#### **4. Improved monitoring of high risk groups, including homeless people**

A lack of comparable data on homelessness represents a challenge in the context of the Semester. However, steps are underway to improve this situation. Firstly, better use could be made of MS' reporting on their homelessness policies in the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and National Social Reports (NSRs). 2014 offers a particular opportunity because MS have received guidance on how to report on their homelessness policies in the NSRs. Furthermore, in the updated Policy Roadmap for the 2014 Implementation of the SIP, DG Employment has committed to revising The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) in order to include homelessness.<sup>14</sup> Making progress on monitoring homelessness and homeless policies would support the full implementation of the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) for tracking progress and monitoring the Employment Guidelines under Europe 2020.<sup>15</sup> The JAF includes 'Policy Area 12: Social inclusion of groups at special risk and antidiscrimination', whereby an assessment should be made of to what extent MS have specific social inclusion and anti-discrimination measures in place to reduce poverty among groups most at risk from social exclusion, including homeless people.

#### **5. Going beyond the Social Scoreboard in the JER**

Factual and comprehensive reporting is of essential importance if the Semester is to deliver. Whilst the Scoreboard of social indicators in the Joint Employment Report (JER) is a positive development, more needs to be done to address issues that are not covered by the indicators. The reporting on policies to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion in the 2014 JER is woefully inadequate, covering just a handful of countries and a small selection of measures. In the future, it must be made more comprehensive and balanced. It may be necessary to complement the JER with specific thematic reports on different dimensions of poverty.

#### **6. More and better CSRs on fighting poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness**

Given the worsening situation as regards poverty and social exclusion in the EU, more priority should be given to CSRs in this field. CSRs on poverty should better reflect social realities in the MS. There is a strong case for giving all MS CSRs on poverty and social inclusion. In some countries, CSRs on homelessness would be justified<sup>16</sup>. This would be in line with the SIP's call on MS to confront homelessness with integrated strategies. At a recent debate with the European Parliament, the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs László Andor stated:

"I would underline that the effectiveness of homelessness-related provisions can also be addressed in the Commission's monitoring exercise within the framework of the European Semester. Member States are therefore encouraged to report on their homelessness strategies in their National Reform Programmes. In this connection, the Commission has the

<sup>14</sup> [Policy Roadmap for the 2014 Implementation of the Social Investment Package](#)

<sup>15</sup> [16984/10](#)

<sup>16</sup> See annex 2 for FEANTSA CSR proposals

opportunity to assess and, if necessary, to make proposals for a Country-Specific Recommendation<sup>17</sup>

Taking account of homelessness in CSRs would also balance or reinforce CSRs relating to housing markets in the framework of macroeconomic surveillance. Better engagement with stakeholders active on homelessness would help support analysis, whilst capacity is developed in terms of EU level data.

## **7. Stronger role for Civil Society**

The role of Civil Society organisations should be strengthened at all levels in the Semester. Better use could be made of their expertise on social realities. Civil Society actors should be enabled to participate in the Social Protection Committee (SPC)'s work on the Semester, mirroring the partnership working between the Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Partners. In many Member States, the involvement of Civil Society stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy could still be improved. The engagement of Commission representations in the Member States with stakeholders could also be strengthened.

## **8. More consistent and transparent social reporting**

In 2014, all MS have been asked to submit National Social Reports (NSRs), which should include homelessness. This is a useful development and can hopefully be maintained in the future. In 2013, strategic social reporting was carried out on the basis of a questionnaire which was not made public. More consistent social reporting and clarification of the relationship between National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and NSRs would be useful to ensure that social reporting in the Semester framework is comprehensive and of sufficient quality. The Council will ask the Social Protection Committee to prepare a report on the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, for discussion by the Council in June 2014. This report must grasp the full reality of growing poverty in Europe and set the bar high in terms of the European Semester's response to it.

## **9. Maintained and strengthened activities to complement the Semester**

Processes and structures beyond the Semester play an important role in supporting the fight against poverty in the EU. These include the Social OMC and the flagship European Platform against Poverty. The European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation should act as a lever in the fight against poverty. Transnational learning and mutual exchange, policy analysis, monitoring, and other activities in these frameworks should be strengthened, in particular to support thematic priorities of the SIP such as homelessness.

## **10. Full consultation of stakeholders in the fight against poverty to review the Europe 2020 Strategy**

FEANTSA welcomes the Commission's proposal for a full public consultation to review the Europe 2020 Strategy, and considers that it is particularly important that stakeholders in the EPAP be engaged in a full partnership to evaluate the poverty and social inclusion dimension of the Strategy and develop recommendations for moving forward.

<sup>17</sup>Debate Thursday, 16 January 2014 – Strasbourg: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20140116+ITEM-005+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

## **Annex 1: Current Trends in Homelessness in the EU**

FEANTSA seeks to improve the available data on homelessness. Despite constraints, our membership monitors homelessness in a continuous fashion. Current trends show that urgent action is required to improve progress on homelessness.

FEANTSA's 2012 Report "On the Way Home?" gave a detailed overview of Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe over the past 5 years. It showed that homelessness remained a problem in all Member States and had increased in the past 1-5 years in at least 15. It also showed that a growing number of MS were developing integrated strategies to tackle homelessness, and that ambitious policies were often able to mitigate the impact of the crisis, and even to make impressive progress in fighting homelessness.

At the end of 2014, FEANTSA will publish a follow-up to this report. In the meantime, four main trends can be identified:

1. Homelessness continues to increase in most EU MS
2. The crisis and austerity measures have led to increases in homelessness in some MS
3. The profiles of people affected by/at risk of homelessness are increasingly diverse. A growing proportion of migrants, women, children and youth are affected by homelessness in the EU.
4. In some contexts, there has been a broadening of the socio-economic profile affected by or at risk of homelessness since the crisis.

The following statistics provide a "snapshot" of increasing homelessness in much of the EU:

- In Denmark, there has been a total increase in homelessness of 16% over the past four years, rising from 4,998 in 2009 to 5,820 persons in 2013.<sup>18</sup>
- In England, the latest Department for Communities and Local Government rough sleeping figures show that the autumn 2013 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England was 2,414. This is up 105 (5%) from the autumn 2012 total of 2,309 and 37% from 1,768 in 2010.<sup>19</sup>
- In France, the national statistics institute (INSEE) reports that approximately 141,500 people were homeless in metropolitan France in 2012. This represents an increase of 50% since 2001.<sup>20</sup>
- Service providers estimate that Greece's homeless population rose by 25% between 2009 and 2011, when it reached 20,000.<sup>21</sup>
- In Italy, ISTAT reported that there were over 47,000 homeless people in Italy in 2011.<sup>22</sup> Initial findings from a follow-up study currently being conducted in partnership with

<sup>18</sup> Benjaminsen, L. & Lauritzen, H. (2013), Hjemløshed i Danmark 2013. National kortlægning. [Homelessness in Denmark 2013. National mapping], Copenhagen, SFI.

<sup>19</sup> DCLG (2014) [Rough Sleeping Statistics England - Autumn 2013](#)

<sup>20</sup> Insee (2013) [L'hébergement des sans-domicile en 2012 Des modes d'hébergement différents selon les situations familiales](#),

<sup>21</sup> [EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review June 2012](#)

FEANTSA member fio.PSD indicate significant increases over the following year (up to 20%).

- In Ireland, the number of households registered with Local Authorities as in need of social housing rose from 1,394 in 2008, to 2,348 in 2011 and to 2,808 in 2013.<sup>23</sup> The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) reports a rise in rough sleeping in Dublin. 139 persons were confirmed to be sleeping rough in November 2013, compared to 94 in April 2013.<sup>24</sup>
- In Poland, statistics from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies indicate that the number of people receiving assistance due to homelessness increased from 33,785 in 2005 to 43,206 in 2012<sup>25</sup>. This data is subject to many limitations and does not capture all homeless people but it does indicate an upward trend.
- In Spain, the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) reported that centres for homeless persons received 22,938 homeless persons in 2012.<sup>26</sup> This compared to 21,900 in 2005, representing an increase of 4.8%. Real increases are likely to be much higher as the survey does not include all homeless people - rough sleepers for example are beyond its scope.

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<sup>22</sup> ISTAT (2012) [Anno 2011 Le Persone Senza Dimora](#)

<sup>23</sup> Housing Agency (2013) [Summary of Social Housing Assessments: Key Findings](#)

<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/94-persons-confirmed-sleeping-rough-dublin>

<sup>25</sup> Ministry's of Labour and Social Policy social welfare statistics sheet (MPIPS-03). See <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/pomoc-spoeczna/raporty-i-statystyki/statystyki-pomocy-spoecznej/>

<sup>26</sup> INE (2013) [Survey on Homeless Persons Results preview](#)



## **Annex 2: FEANTSA Proposals for CSRs Relating to Homelessness**

Below is a list of FEANTSA's proposals for CSRs. Full justifications for each proposal are available in the separate document [‘FEANTSA Proposals for Country Specific Recommendations on Homelessness 2014’](#).

### **Proposal 1**

**Member State:** United Kingdom

**CSR Proposal:** The UK should enhance measures to prevent and address increases in child and family homelessness where these are occurring.

### **Proposal 2**

**Member State:** Hungary

**CSR Proposal:** Hungary should stop criminalizing homelessness and develop an integrated strategy that supports pathways into affordable rental housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and housing exclusion.

### **Proposal 3**

**Member State:** Sweden

**CSR Proposal:** Ensure that any measures taken to improve the efficiency of the housing market are complemented by targeted measures to support pathways into affordable rental housing for people experiencing or at risk of housing exclusion and/or homelessness.

### **Proposal 4**

**Member State:** The Netherlands

**CSR Proposal:** The Netherlands should enhance measures to prevent and address increases in child and youth homelessness where these are occurring

### **Proposal 5**

**Member State:** Belgium

**CSR Proposal:** Continue to develop homelessness and housing exclusion policies in line with the policy guidance outlined in the Social Investment Package, taking particular account of the vulnerability of people with a migrant background to homelessness.

### **Proposal 6**

**Member State:** Czech Republic

**CSR Proposal:** Implement the announced “Concept of Solution of the Homelessness Issue in the Czech Republic 2020”<sup>27</sup>. In line with the Social Investment Package, place particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention to support pathways out of homelessness and into affordable housing.

### **Proposal 7**

**Member State:** Luxembourg

**CSR Proposal:** Implement the announced “National Strategy to Counter Homelessness and Housing Exclusion”. In line with the social investment package, place particular emphasis on prevention and early intervention to support pathways out of homelessness and into affordable housing.

### **Proposal 8**

**Member State:** Denmark

**CSR Proposal:** Develop further provision to enhance access to affordable rental housing and support

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<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2013) Koncepce prevence a řešení problematiky bezdomovectví v ČR do roku 2020, available at: <http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/16156>



for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and/or housing exclusion.

**Proposal 9**

**Member State:** Romania

**CSR Proposal:** In order to support the ongoing social assistance reform; develop a homelessness data collection system so as to inform the planning and delivery of social services in this area.

**Proposal 10**

**Member State:** Spain

**CSR Proposal:** Spain should urgently develop integrated policies to confront homelessness based on prevention, housing-led approaches and reviewing regulations and practices on eviction. In a context of rising homelessness, there is a need to urgently address both the immediate support needs and the long-term need for an affordable rental housing market.

**Proposal 11**

**Member State:** Lithuania

**CSR Proposal:** Invest in social services to promote the active inclusion of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, particularly the most vulnerable. In this context, further develop homeless policies and services in line with the policy guidance contained in the Social Investment Package.

**Proposal 12**

**Member State:** France

**CSR proposal:** France should continue to make progress towards an integrated, housing-led strategy to tackle homelessness.

**Proposal 13**

**Member State:** Poland

**CSR proposal:** Poland should develop an integrated national strategy to combat homelessness and housing exclusion, which includes the development of a reliable homelessness data collection system, interministerial cooperation, and improving access to housing.

### **Annex 3: FEANTSA Analysis of Poverty and Homelessness in Key Elements of the Semester**

The main elements of the Semester which should deal directly with the social inclusion and poverty dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy are the Annual Growth Survey, the Joint Employment Report, the National Reform Programmes, the National Social Reports and the Country Specific Recommendations. These are supported by the Joint Assessment Framework and the Social Protection Performance Monitor. FEANTSA has analysed each of these elements' contribution to tackling poverty and homelessness through the Semester. Other dimensions of the Semester are beyond the scope of this document, although they clearly are relevant to the social situation in the European Union.

#### ***Annual Growth Survey***

The Annual Growth Survey (AGS) kicks off the Semester by laying out the priorities for the year ahead. FEANTSA welcomed the following aspects of this year's AGS:<sup>28</sup>

- The inclusion of “tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis” as a priority;
- Focus on the need for active inclusion strategies, including measures to tackle poverty and to broaden access to affordable and high-quality services (including social, health and housing services);
- Focus on the importance of personalised services, specifically for vulnerable groups.

Overall, the 2014 AGS included issues relevant to the fight against poverty and homelessness, in the context of delivering on the poverty target and the SIP. However, at the same time, the AGS's concern with fiscal consolidation and macroeconomic surveillance has contributed to a worsening social situation and increasing poverty, including homelessness, in some MS. It is furthermore problematic to reduce the focus on poverty to analysing the social impacts of the crisis.

#### ***Joint Employment Report***

The AGS is accompanied by the Joint Employment Report (JER) which specifically analyses employment and social policy developments. In 2014, the JER included for the first time a social scoreboard of indicators on unemployment, youth unemployment, at risk of poverty rate, inequalities and household income. FEANTSA welcomed this step towards reinforcing the social dimension of the Semester.

However, FEANTSA also strongly stresses that some relevant dimensions of poverty, including homelessness, are not addressed by the indicators currently included in the scoreboard, leaving a significant gap. This is highly problematic when it comes to issues such as homelessness, which are thematic priorities of the SIP but which are currently not properly taken into account in monitoring progress in the fight against poverty as part of the Semester.

The 2014 JER did attempt to describe new policies to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion in some MS. Unfortunately, the result was partial and misleading. Only a handful of countries' homelessness/housing exclusion policies were described (Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain, France, Slovakia, Netherlands, Belgium). The level of reporting was highly superficial and unbalanced. Individual measures were listed as positive without any critical analysis of the implementation, description of accompanying measures, or consideration of actual progress (or lack thereof) in tackling homelessness. Two brief examples demonstrate these limitations:

- Hungary is cited as having introduced positive housing measures to tackle segregation. However, no mention is made of the fact that Hungary has changed its constitution to allow the criminalisation of homeless people.

<sup>28</sup> [FEANTSA Reaction to the 2014 Annual Growth Survey](#)

- France is cited as having introduced measures to increase affordable social and rental housing for low-income households. However no mention is made of the latest official statistics about homelessness, which show a massive increase of 50% over the last 10 years.<sup>29</sup>

Without contextualising the individual measures referred, the JER cannot contribute much in terms of supporting MS to confront homelessness. It appears that the SPC report '*Social policy reforms for growth and cohesion: Review of recent structural reforms 2013*'<sup>30</sup> is the main source of information for the 2014 JER. FEANTSA has previously raised serious concerns about the quality of the information contained in this report. Members in the UK described it as "a woeful misrepresentation of the UK's welfare reforms drafted by people living in a parallel universe"<sup>31</sup> because of its failure to grasp the impact of current welfare reforms on levels of homelessness. Presumably this report provided the background for a recent Commission press release entitled 'Social Investment Package: taking stock of achievements one year on' which stated simply that 'Spain, The Netherlands, the UK, Hungary, Slovakia and Latvia adopted measures to tackle homelessness and improve access to housing'.<sup>32</sup>

Overall, FEANTSA's evaluation of the JER's contribution on homelessness demonstrates that there is an urgent need for better qualitative and quantitative measuring of key dimensions of poverty for which comparable data is not currently available.

#### **National Reform Programmes and National Social Reports**

The 2014 reports are not currently available. However, FEANTSA's analysis shows that homelessness has been quite widely addressed by MS in the Semester, demonstrating that national authorities do consider it to be an important dimension of anti-poverty policies in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In 2013, 11 countries reported targeted social investments to address homelessness (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and the UK). New, integrated homelessness strategies were highlighted in three countries (Czech Republic, Greece and Luxembourg). This shows increasing awareness of the need for specific strategies to complete general welfare and housing measures, particularly in the context of the crisis – as called for in the SIP.

The role of National Social Reports in the European Semester has so far not been consistent. In 2013, Strategic Social Reporting was carried out via a questionnaire that was never made public. In 2014, full National Social Reports are to be developed and submitted in conjunction with NRPs. These will focus on reviewing progress in achieving the OMC objectives, and will provide a basis for the Committee's report to the October 2014 Council on the structural social protection reforms covering July 2013 to June 2014. As referred to above, this report is used in the context of the JER, so it is important that the quality of information submitted in the NSRs be high.

According to the guidance for 2014,<sup>33</sup> each NSR should detail the state of play of the Member State in pursuing the poverty and social exclusion target. Furthermore, detailed information should be provided on homeless policies, including:

- Implementing strategies to prevent, confront and measure homelessness;
- Improving quality of and access to social, health and other targeted services for homeless people;
- Improving access to adequate, affordable housing, including social housing;

<sup>29</sup> See <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/ipweb/ip1455/ip1455.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7674>

<sup>31</sup> FEANTSA Reaction to the 2014 Annual Growth Survey

<sup>32</sup> See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2037&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>33</sup> [Guidance for the Strategic Social Reporting 2014 SPC/2013.12/9,](#)

- Changes concerning measures and services to better prevent evictions/loss of permanent accommodation;
- Reform of housing benefits/support.

FEANTSA whole-heartedly welcomes this development and hopes that it marks the start of better integration of progress on poverty, including its extreme forms - like homelessness - into the Semester. National stakeholders, including services working with homeless people, are supposed to be consulted in the drafting of NSRs. FEANTSA members welcome the opportunity to input into meaningful reporting on social policy progress in the context of NSRs. In reality, the scope for stakeholder engagement is variable.

### ***Country Specific Recommendations***

So far, eight MS have received a CSR on poverty. This seems low given the lack of progress that is actually being made towards the EU poverty target. EU-SILC data shows that just five MS - Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Romania – have managed to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion since 2010. The total of all the poverty commitments of the MS amounts to only 12 million people rather than the 20 million agreed. The fact that only a fraction of the EU MS are making progress towards the diluted EU target should be an issue of serious concern for EU policy makers, and yet this does not seem to be reflected in the CSRs.

Indeed, the CSRs seem not to take account of regression away from or progress towards the poverty target. Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Romania, who have been given CSRs on poverty, are amongst the ones making the best progress towards their targets. Of course, the CSRs are intended to take account of the scope and seriousness of poverty and not only progress towards the national target - especially given that some countries have set more ambitious targets than others. Nonetheless, there is definitely scope within this delicate exercise for more and better CSRs on poverty. FEANTSA considers that there is a strong case for giving all MS CSRs relating to poverty.

No mention has been made so far in CSRs of the urgent problem of homelessness, despite growing numbers of homeless people in virtually all European countries and homelessness being a priority of the SIP. In the future, it would be relevant for CSRs to focus more on homelessness where this is justified by increasing levels or inadequate policy responses. This possibility is referred to within the SIP.

### ***The Joint Assessment Framework***

The Employment Committee (EMCO), Social Protection Committee (SPC) and Commission have agreed on a Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) for tracking progress and monitoring the Employment Guidelines under Europe 2020. The JAF results are used for implementation of the European Semester. The JAF is heavily focused on employment but does have a broader social inclusion and poverty dimension. In this context, it seeks to provide the SPC with an analytical tool which enables cross country comparison and supports:

- Monitoring of progress in relation to the social aspects of the employment guidelines, in particular guideline 10 (Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty), and in this way contributing to the Joint Employment Report;
- Overall assessment by the SPC of progress towards the EU headline target on social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- Elaboration of the Annual Growth Survey and the SPC report on the social dimension of Europe 2020 in view of the Council debates at the beginning of each European Semester and the policy orientations to be adopted by the Spring European Council.

The JAF identifies a set of policy areas that should be assessed. In the context of guideline 10, the JAF includes 'Policy Area 12: Social inclusion of groups at special risk and antidiscrimination', under

which an assessment should be made of to what extent specific social inclusion and anti-discrimination measures are in place help reduce poverty among groups most at risk from social exclusion such as minorities including the Roma, people with disabilities, migrants, and **homeless people**. So far, progress on developing methodologies to account for Policy Area 12 within the Semester has been limited, particularly as regards homelessness. This has hampered the capacity of the Semester to support progress towards the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Social Investment Package.

### ***Social Protection Performance Monitor***

The overall objective of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) is to reinforce and support the coordination of social policy and multilateral surveillance. It is complementary to the JAF, focusing more on broad trends than the detailed situation in individual MS.

It uses a “dashboard”, which is a selection of indicators from the EU portfolio on social protection and social inclusion to provide a summary set/first tier of monitoring of the social situation in the EU. It focuses on social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long-term care.

Homelessness is not captured by the indicators including in the SPPM. For the Semester to deliver on homelessness there is a need to supplement the SPPM with more detailed analysis of qualitative and quantitative information, including non comparable national data. There is also an urgent need to revise EU-SILC to include homelessness, so that it could eventually be integrated into instruments like the SPPM.



FEANTSA 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/employment\\_social/progress/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html)

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