



FEANTSA NEWS

Youth Network Study Session: Preventing and Addressing Youth Homelessness Through Access to Social Rights

In March, FEANTSA held its first [Study Session](#) at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. In cooperation with the Council of Europe's Youth Department, FEANTSA organised a week-long session for young people working with youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The participants came primarily from FEANTSA member organisations and, over the course of the week, decided to form a network: FEANTSA's Youth Homelessness Network. The Study Session gave participants the opportunity to:

- develop a deeper understanding of human rights education and social rights in particular;
- exchange ideas on raising awareness about social rights amongst young people and in their organisations and communities;
- share their experiences of practice and policy in their work with homeless or at risk young people and learn from others;
- share practices to help combat discrimination against young people, particularly when they try to access their social rights;
- develop skills for working with partners and building coalitions in different countries, across different sectors (health, justice, social care, education).

The 40 participants came from 21 countries and brought with them experience and knowledge about youth homelessness, working with migrants, legal and human rights issues and homelessness prevention strategies. They discussed their experiences throughout the week. Several expert lecturers joined the participants during the week. FEANTSA Director Freek Spinnewijn provided an insight into FEANTSA's work with the Council of Europe and the European Union, with a particular focus on human rights and housing rights. Dr Stephen Gaetz from York University in Canada joined the group to provide a keynote presentation on the prevention of youth homelessness and lead the participants in workshops to create prevention plans for use in their own communities. Sonia Olea Ferreras from Caritas Spain engaged the participants in workshops on advocacy and human rights, encouraging the participants to consider the human rights aspects of their own work.

Feedback from participants and presenters has been very positive and FEANTSA will apply for another grant from the Council of Europe to hold a second study session in 2015. The FEANTSA office coordinated the programme in cooperation with valuable and professional support from the Council of Europe's Youth Department and a small team of volunteers. The office is currently preparing a toolkit on the prevention of youth homelessness which will be available to all members in autumn 2014.

For more information or if you wish to join the Youth Homelessness Network, please contact [Samara Jones](#).

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

The ten messages FEANTSA sent to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) ahead of its policy debate on the 2014 European Semester are now available [in French](#).

Getting it Right: Communicating About Homelessness –

“Homeless in Europe” Spring 2014

The Spring 2014 issue of *Homeless in Europe* Magazine is now [available](#).

FEANTSA Involved in Project ‘Towards Cost-Effective Housing Policy for Flanders and Europe’

FEANTSA and CECODHAS are involved in a [project](#) on cost effective housing policy in cooperation with the Flemish government. FEANTSA and CECODHAS will test ideas with their housing and social affairs working groups, EU-level housing organisations (via the European Housing Forum) and organise the dissemination of the outcomes via a European conference.

FEANTSA Attends Swedish Homelessness Conference

On the 7th and 8th of April, FEANTSA attended a conference on homelessness and housing exclusion held by the Swedish national coordinator for homelessness and the Swedish ministry of social affairs in Vasteras, Sweden. More than 500 participants from municipalities, NGOs and Government agencies gathered to exchange and learn about new methods such as Housing First, housing mediation and others.

Housing Rights Watch Expert Workshop: Finding real solutions to the housing crisis - 13 June, Madrid, Spain

This Housing Rights Watch [event](#) is designed to bring together experts working in housing, including housing economics, law, housing rights, homeless services, social housing, financing and foundations, local governments, academics and other groups and individuals. The programme is available [online](#). Contact [Samara Jones](#) to register.

EU NEWS

HABITACT Peer Review - Athens, Greece

Athens municipality hosted the 2014 HABITACT peer review, in which a delegation of key Athens players in the fight against homelessness (including Mayor Yiorgos Kaminis), representatives from ten European local authorities, and European/international experts (including from Pathways to Housing and the World Bank) participated. All meeting documents (agenda, peer review discussion paper, and EU funding briefing) can be found in the members' area of the [HABITACT website](#). A meeting report will be available soon.

Bronze Statue of Homeless Person to Be Displayed in European Parliament

The Danish government has presented the European Parliament with a bronze statue of a homeless person by famous Danish sculptor Jens Galschiøt. The sculpture will remain part of the European Parliament's art collection and will be on permanent display. It is one of a series of statues commissioned by FEANTSA member projekt UDENFOR for the [Ending Homelessness Campaign](#) and which were exhibited in various places around Europe as part of the campaign (in 2009-2010). The handover

ceremony took place on the 8th April in the European Parliament. This is another demonstration of the European Parliament's commitment to homelessness.

Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion Assesses Progress Towards EU2020 Social Inclusion Objectives

The [report](#), "Assessment of progress towards the Europe 2020 social inclusion objectives: Main findings and suggestions on the way forward, A Study of National Policies" by the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion, summarises the main findings of the independent experts' country analyses. It also puts forward concrete suggestions for strengthening the social inclusion dimension of the National Reform Programme (NRP) process in future. Homelessness is one of the main focuses and the experts call for a specific action plan on homelessness.

European Parliament Adopts European Union Law on Access to Basic Bank Accounts - Homeless People a Target Group

Anyone legally residing in the European Union, including people with no permanent address, would have the right to open a basic payment account, and no-one could be denied this right on grounds of nationality or place of residence, under a new law [passed](#) by the European Parliament. To take effect, the new rules must be officially approved by the member states, which will then have 24 months to transpose them into their national laws.

EU Measures to Tackle Youth Unemployment

The EU is working to reduce youth unemployment and to increase the youth employment rate in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). This [leaflet](#) gives an overview of the latest measures proposed by the EU to help Member States specifically tackle youth unemployment and social exclusion. It is available in English, French and German.

UN NEWS

UN Human Rights Committee Calls U.S. Criminalisation of Homelessness "Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading"

The UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva has [condemned](#) the criminalisation of homelessness in the United States as "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" that violates international human rights treaty obligations, and called upon the U.S. government to take corrective action.

UN Human Rights Council Adopts Resolution Including References to Security of Tenure

At its 25th session, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a [resolution](#) on adequate housing, including references to security of tenure. The resolution renews the housing mandate for another three years.

The UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Also Relevant for Homeless People

Research on homelessness and empirical evidence from homeless service professionals show that many homeless people have physical or mental health issues or are living with addiction. FEANTSA member BAWO [argues](#) that the UN Disability Convention thus provides essential guidelines for homelessness policy, as it focuses on people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in combination with various other barriers, can hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Article 1). If we start from this broad definition, many homeless people fall under the concept of disability, especially when the idea of inclusion is involved, says BAWO. Austria was one of the first countries to ratify the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2008. The goal of the Convention is "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (Article 1).

Booklet on Security of Tenure

The Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik, has created an illustrated [booklet](#) containing guiding principles on security of tenure for poor people living in urban areas.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Austria: First BAWO Working Group on Gender Budgeting at Annual Conference

The BAWO Vienna Women's Working Group will run a [workshop](#) on gender budgeting, taking place for the first time at this year's BAWO conference in May. While the keywords "gender mainstreaming" and "women-specific work" have long been established in the homeless sector and have led to change and the redesigning of concepts and service provision, gender budgeting is a relatively little-used tool. During this workshop, gender budgeting will be transformed from being an abstract concept into a tangible and manageable tool for the homelessness sector.

Belgium: Health Service Requests Donations

Since 2007, people who do not have access to care as a result of their difficult life situations, such as homeless people, can get healthcare from the health service provided by the *Relais social du Pays de Charleroi*. The team is made up of a case worker, a nurse, a head doctor and a receptionist. Four volunteers, including a psychiatrist, complete the team. The staff gives primary care to people in need through doctor's appointments and nursing and social drop-in sessions. "It is important to make the link between healthcare and social needs", says the social service coordinator. "In 2013, we assisted 639 different people for 1513 healthcare interventions carried out by our nurses. These numbers have been increasing steadily since 2010. Requests for mental health treatment have increased 38 % since 2012." Unfortunately, the service is short of funding. It therefore asks for donations to help the service to carry out its activities.

Denmark: projekt UDENFOR Work in Run-Up to European Elections

In the context of the forthcoming European elections projekt UDENFOR has initiated a series of activities designed to ensure attention at European level for homelessness and particularly cross-border homelessness. Early this month, they held a debate

at which Danish parliamentary candidates spoke under the heading "Homelessness in light of free movement in Europe". The debate on homeless EU citizens will continue at a university event in Copenhagen on the 8th May. Please see the projekt UDENFOR [website](#) for more information.

France: Valls Memorandum, NGOs Demand Withdrawal of Text

The French Interior Minister's 11th March 2014 Memorandum on the 2014 priorities in terms of the "fight against irregular immigration" is, for NGOs who have signed a [press release](#) calling for its retraction, another example of the Minister's "doublespeak" in which he "boasts to the press that he has ended "quota-based policy", only to congratulate himself in the memorandum on the fact that "the total number of forced returns has reached its highest level since 2006" and to draw up a plan intended to speed up every step of the expulsion process." The text encourages authorities to use all coercive methods possible, with the approval of the police, such as targeted identity checks, arresting people in their homes or in the shelters where they are staying, detentions, house arrest with the obligation to declare one's presence, heavily-pressured "voluntary" returns, custodial remand and criminal convictions for those refusing to cooperate, say the NGOs. NGOs and social workers are forced to take part in finding and checking up on people when their role is actually to give them help and support, they say. The press release says that asylum seekers are particularly targeted. They are excluded from the universal emergency accommodation system and put under house arrest and kept under close surveillance. The defining principle of unconditional access to services that are open to everyone living on the street and experiencing hardship is thus called into question even though it is guaranteed by the code governing community care and family services. The signatory NGOs, including FEANTSA members, call for the retraction of this text, which they find to be an affront to migrants' fundamental rights and a worrying signal ahead of the parliamentary debate on asylum reform in France.

France: FNARS Dossier on Prostitution

FNARS has produced a [dossier](#) about the experiences of people in prostitution in France, the (changes in the) law surrounding it and the appropriate response (support, housing or accommodation options, resettlement, etc) from a service-provider perspective.

Germany: Calling for a Homelessness Programme

A housing shortage and rising rental prices are forcing more people into homelessness in Germany. This is why BAGW calls for the development of a national framework against homelessness and social exclusion.

Italy: Homeless People and Health, Prevention and Cure

fio.PSD has launched a survey to improve its knowledge of the health services available to homeless people and encourage reflection on the prevention and cure of the illnesses linked to extreme social exclusion in adults and their different forms. This knowledge base will allow fio.PSD to fulfil its role as representative of the needs resulting from severe exclusion and to prepare a programme of activities and awareness-raising for national, regional and local policy makers on these issues.

Spain: 40,000 Homeless People and 1.5 Million Families in Inadequate Housing

The Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) recognises 23,000 homeless people in Spain. Caritas Spain contests this figure and says that there are 40,000 homeless people, with the most being in Barcelona, which is the only place that counts migrants in its totals. They also count 1.5 million families in inadequate housing. They maintain that the INE has not counted all the people sleeping rough and that local estimates, where they exist, are not comparable as different methodologies or timescales have been used. Local authorities' reluctance to calculate the number of homeless people, say Caritas, is partly linked to the stigma surrounding homelessness, where the individual is blamed for his/her situation, ignoring the structural factors that are behind homelessness.

Spain: RAIS Fundación Homeless Youth Project

RAIS Fundación, with the support of Bankia and Fundación Caja Madrid, has set up a [project](#) to help homeless youth achieve independence and make the transition into adulthood as smooth as possible. It wants to avoid the shortage of housing becoming a factor in their exclusion and to guarantee their stability. It is targeted at young people between 18 and 25 years of age who have been in contact with homeless services and do not have the resources to meet their basic accommodation and subsistence needs or others who have no family or other support network. The project will last a maximum of 12 months for each young person and will depend on different objectives being met in that time. Each individual will have a personal work plan that touches on all areas that have an effect on the person's trajectory (social contacts, employment and training, legal advice, health needs, participation and leisure, etc), fostering access to positive social contacts, reinforcing their personal qualities and strengthening their skills.

Every young person in the programme will have a case worker, with whom they will devise and carry out their own short- and long-term objectives in line with their personal development.

UK: Crisis - Housing Benefit Cuts Leaving Vulnerable at Greater Risk of Homelessness

Crisis has [responded](#) to a UK government report on support for housing costs in the reformed welfare system. The charity criticised the government for having said that cuts must not be made at the expense of the most vulnerable and while the report shows that housing benefit cuts are hitting the most vulnerable hardest and are forcing more people into poor quality accommodation and leaving them at greater risk of homelessness.

UK: Mungo's Broadway Supporting Women's Recovery Conference

Mungo's Broadway (a merger between St Mungo's and Broadway Homelessness and Support) recently held its third annual Supporting Women's Recovery [Conference](#). The conference looked at how to build on the results of the recently completed Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign, including: challenging beliefs and culture on consent, sexual violence and safety; working with male clients to improve attitudes to, and understanding of, the challenges women face; tackling loneliness and boredom; supporting women who have moved on into their own homes and producing guidance around advocacy with social services and families, as well as addressing self-harm and eating disorders, domestic violence and exiting prostitution.

UK: Arts Project Celebrates Transformative Power of Creative Opportunities for Homeless People

A Homeless Link [report](#) celebrates the value of creative activities for people who are homeless and makes the case for continued investment in arts projects. "Get Creative: Art for All" gives evidence for the benefits of engaging this vulnerable group in creative activity, and the positive impact this has on people's lives, through in-depth case studies and testimonials. The paper makes a number of recommendations for commissioners, arts and cultural institutions and homelessness services, including: thinking innovatively about ways to inspire change and move away from traditional methods of support; reducing levels of exclusion from mainstream arts experienced by homeless people and engaging artists and creative organisations with homelessness services to offer high quality projects.

HEADLINES

France: 25% of Homeless People Are in Employment

According to an INSEE [survey](#), in early 2012, a quarter of French-speaking homeless adults using support services had a job and two-fifths of them were receiving unemployment payments. Moreover, nine out of ten homeless people have worked at some point during their lives. Homeless people with jobs have more stable accommodation conditions than other homeless people. However, they have little job security: 22% do undeclared work and 15% are temporary workers, interns or seasonal workers. What is more, two out of three homeless people have been employed by the same employer for less than a year and three out of five receive a salary that is below 900 Euros a month.

Many homeless people are trying to get more work, especially women. Of the homeless people who are receiving unemployment payments, 43% have been looking for a job for more than two years. Very often, they receive help with their applications from NGOs and social workers, but they come up against many obstacles when looking for a job. The cost or the absence of transport are the biggest obstacles they give to finding a job.

Greece: Prime Minister Announces Social Measures to Help Homeless People

Greece's Prime Minister has announced new social measures to support homeless people, particularly "those most affected by the crisis". A social housing institution will use empty buildings belonging to the state to create housing for homeless people, and provide them with medical care. The authorities have already found 35 buildings suitable for this cause. The state will cooperate with private initiatives in order to raise funds for this project. The government will also renovate a temporary accommodation centre for homeless people in Athens and build other such centres in Thessaloniki, Patras, Ioannina and Larissa.

Ireland: Charities Say Rising Rents and Welfare Caps Price Families Out of Rental Market

More than 170 homeless families are living in hotels across the Irish capital, Dublin, as authorities struggle to cope with an unprecedented surge in demand for emergency support. Charities say the rising cost of rent, combined with caps on rent support and a shortage of affordable accommodation, mean low-income families are being priced out of the private rented market. Many have never experienced homelessness before. Overall, the number of homeless people in emergency shelters or temporary beds on a nightly basis has climbed to in excess of 1,600 in the capital, while numbers sleeping rough have increased by 50 per cent since April last year, latest figures show.

Italy: Homelessness Increasing – 2,700 New ‘Street Lawyer’ Practices

More and more people are asking for help from NGO *Avvocato di strada* ('Street Lawyer')'s 37 advice clinics. Six out of ten people asking for help are foreigners and the number of women is increasing. Most have problems linked to residence and employment. These are the results of the *Avvocato di strada* 2013 [report](#).

Spain: Parliament to Examine Creation of a Homelessness Strategy

The parliamentary group *El Grupo Parlamentario Popular* has presented the Spanish Parliament with a motion asking for the National Homelessness Strategy to be rolled out. This initiative was to be included in the National Action Plan for Social

Inclusion 2013-2016 and was to involve the autonomous communities, local councils and third-sector organisations.

Spain: Proposals for Preventing Homelessness

The Platform for Third Sector bodies in Catalonia, which brings together close to 4,000 social NGO, has presented a dossier, available in [Catalan](#) and [Spanish](#), entitled 'Crisis, Impoverishment and Homeless People'. The dossier includes a series of measures for combating homelessness in Catalonia.

UK: New Centre for Preventing Family Conflict and Youth Homelessness

A new Scotland-wide national mediation resource centre dedicated to tackling youth homelessness has been launched. Every year, nearly 6,000 young people become homeless in Scotland because of family relationship breakdown. The Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) hopes to use mediation to help families and prevent young people becoming homeless in the first place.

UK: Concern About Welfare Changes That Could Result In More EU Migrants Becoming Homeless

The UK government has introduced severe limitations placed on European Economic Area (EEA) migrants' rights to Housing Benefit. The [changes](#) came into force on the 1st April 2014. The restrictions mean that migrants from the EEA will not be able to claim housing benefit unless they find employment. If their job ends, they will only be able to claim housing benefit for a maximum of six months. The changes also extend to EEA migrants who in the UK before April. Homelessness NGOs are concerned that this could lead to increasing homelessness among EEA migrants and believe the policy runs counter to other Government policies providing incentives for people to take on paid work and encouraging people to make realistic housing choices. Homeless Link and Crisis have published a [briefing](#) on the information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Date - "A Home For All"

9th-10th October 2014, Oslo, Norway

A home is one of the cornerstones in the lives of most people. Supporting vulnerable people in the community by applying a multi-sectorial collaboration model in service provision is currently a challenge for and responsibility of service providers and authorities across Europe. This [conference](#) will focus on one of the currently most pressing issues in European politics.

World Habitat Awards

Submissions are [welcome](#) for the 2014/15 World Habitat Awards. Housing projects and approaches are sought that:

- demonstrate practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to current housing issues faced by countries all around the world
- can be transferred or adapted for use as appropriate
- are already being implemented or are completed
- view the term "habitat" from a broad perspective and bring other benefits as well, such as energy or water saving, income

generation, social inclusion, community and individual empowerment, health benefits, capacity building or education.

All entries are assessed and ten projects are shortlisted by an assessment committee. These shortlisted projects are then evaluated by an independent advisory group.

PUBLICATIONS

National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report

This [report](#) documents the final results of the At Home/Chez Soi research demonstration project, which examined Housing First as a means of ending homelessness for people living with mental health issues in Canada. The project followed more than 2,000 participants for two years, and was the world's largest Housing First trial. The study found that 62% of patients provided with immediate access to permanent housing stayed housed by the end of the two-year program, while only 31% of people not housed were able to get themselves out of homelessness. Canada has officially adopted the Housing First strategy for tackling homelessness and mental illness after the convincing study results were made public.

More Older Women Facing Homelessness

Researchers at The University of Western Australia have [confirmed](#) what advocates have been warning for some time - increasing numbers of older women are becoming homeless. "We are seeing a lot of women nearing retirement age who are experiencing increasing difficulty in finding affordable and secure housing," say the researchers. "If there is insufficient superannuation, a partner dies or something goes wrong financially, women are finding themselves in very dire circumstances. The private rental market is too expensive, there is a lengthy wait for public housing and emergency accommodation, such as a boarding house, is often unsuitable for women." The researchers say that more resources needed to be directed towards the problem. "We need to advocate for services that prevent older women from becoming homeless in the first place but we should also put in place services that respond quickly and effectively if they do become homeless," they said.

Problem Gambling Among the Homeless Population

Homeless people are ten times more likely to be problem gamblers than the UK population as a whole, researchers at Cambridge University have [found](#). The study provides new insight into a rarely studied problem and suggests homeless services should offer clients more support to identify and tackle problem gambling. Compared with the UK population as a whole, where problem gambling affects 0.7% of people, the level of problem gambling among homeless people was 11.6%, the study showed. In identifying the significant scale of the problem, the study may pave the way to developing new homelessness services as users are not usually asked questions about gambling in their assessments, whereas asking such questions could get a clearer picture of service users' needs and allow services to target help better. The next stage of the project will be to find out whether gambling is a cause or consequence of homelessness, study the links between gambling and alcohol and drug use and look at so-called "negative life events". "Regardless of whether gambling is a cause or a consequence, recognising and addressing this problem will hopefully give affected individuals a better chance of getting off – and more importantly staying off – the streets," say the researchers.

Study on Housing First in the Netherlands

Impuls – the Netherlands Centre for Social Care Research, part of Radboud University Medical Centre in Nijmegen, has published the [results](#) of a nationwide mapping of Housing First in the Netherlands. The study aimed to describe the characteristics of existing Housing First programmes in relation to the Pathways to Housing model developed by Sam Tsemberis, and to assess the available scientific evidence for the effectiveness of Housing First both in the Netherlands and abroad. The study identified 18 Housing First programmes in the Netherlands by the beginning of February 2014. Despite differences in the operationalisation and implementation of Housing First, these programmes are to a large extent in line with the principles and requirements of the Pathways to Housing model. The programmes show high housing retention rates (between 79 and 93%) and appear to be successful in housing a highly vulnerable population of homeless people with complex, multiple problems and high care needs. Please contact [Judith Wolf](#) if you have any questions.

A Safe and Decent Place to Live: Towards a Housing First Framework for Youth

Across North America and elsewhere in the world, Housing First is recognised as an effective and humane approach to addressing homelessness. The need for a consideration of how Housing First works for young people (aged 13-25) is based on concerns raised by policy-makers, practitioners and indeed, young persons themselves, about the applicability of models and approaches developed for adults who are homeless, when applied to a youthful population. The framework presented [here](#) by The Homelessness Hub is intended to provide communities and funders with a clear understanding of what Housing First is, and how it can work to support young people who experience, or are at risk of, homelessness.

Traumatic Brain Injury and Homelessness

A Canadian [study](#) has found that almost half of homeless men had traumatic brain injury in their lifetime, vast majority before they lost their homes. Almost half of all homeless men who took part in the study had suffered at least one traumatic brain injury in their life and 87% of those injuries occurred before they lost their homes. While assaults were a major cause of those traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), (60 per cent) many were caused by potentially non-violent mechanisms such as sports and recreation (44 per cent) and motor vehicle collisions and falls (42 per cent). Dr. Jane Topolovec-Vranic, the study leader, said it is important for health care providers and others who work with homeless people to be aware of any history of TBI because of the links between such injuries and mental health issues, substance abuse, seizures and poorer physical health. The fact that so many homeless men suffered a TBI before losing their home suggests such injuries could be a risk factor for becoming homeless, she said. That makes it even more important to monitor young people who suffer TBIs such as concussions for health and behavioural changes, she said.



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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-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

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