



FEANTSA NEWS

FEANTSA 2015 Policy Conference

The FEANTSA [Policy Conference 2015](#): "*Homelessness, a Local Phenomenon with a European Dimension – Key Steps to Connect Communities to Europe*", took place in Paris, France from 18th-20th June 2015. The conference was preceded by a number of service visits and meetings, including a Housing Rights Watch one-day [conference on strategic litigation](#). Read the Policy Conference [press release](#) and see the [photos](#). All speakers' [presentations are now online](#) and the Twitter proceedings can be found under [#feantsa2015](#).

At its meeting following the FEANTSA 2015 Policy Conference on 20th June, the FEANTSA General Assembly adopted the Paris Declaration, which is currently available in Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Polish and Spanish on the [conference webpage](#).

Research Conference on Homelessness: Registration Deadline 10 September

[Registration](#) is now open for the [10th European Research Conference on Homelessness](#), 'Families, Housing and Homelessness', taking place on the 25th September in Dublin, Ireland. Registration closes on the 10th September. To tweet about the conference, use the hashtag [#eohconfdublin](#).

European Journal of Homelessness: Volume 9, Issue 1

The European Observatory on Homelessness is pleased to announce that The European Journal of Homelessness: Volume 9, Issue 1, *Homelessness in Times of Crisis* is now available [online](#) and in print. Print copies cost €20. To order a printed copy contact information@feantsa.org.

Housing Rights Watch Newsletter - Spring 2015

The Spring 2015 issue of the Housing Rights Watch newsletter is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Results of Member Survey on Women's Homelessness

In its efforts to work more extensively on women's homelessness, as called for by the General Assembly, the FEANTSA office conducted a survey among its members to find out which members are working with women who are homeless, are involved in advocacy around the issue of women's homelessness and are interested in working closely with FEANTSA on this issue. The high response rate showed that our members consider women's homelessness to be an important topic with many among them already providing gender-specific services to women who are homeless. Most members contributing to the survey welcomed the opportunity to contribute to future work, including an exchange of best practices and advocacy work at European level.

FEANTSA Involved in Appeal for Migrant, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Reception Policy

At a [press conference](#) on the eve of the European Council meeting on migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, NGOs AEDH, European Alternatives, Emmaüs Europe, FEANTSA, FIDH, Doctors of the World, Migreurop, EMHRN and SOLIDAR [presented](#) a European [appeal](#) for a migrant, asylum-seeker and refugee reception policy.

Background Paper: The Links between Violence against Women and Homelessness

Violence against women is a brutal manifestation of gender inequality and a serious violation of human rights. One in three women (33 %) in the EU has experienced physical and/or sexual violence was after the age of 15. Increasing attention is paid both at national and European level to violence against women. It is certainly an issue that is not only on the political agenda, but is also being tackled through legislative means: important European legislation has been introduced in recent years. It is important that the needs and views of women who are homeless and are survivors of violence be taken into account in the drawing up of policy and in practice and to ensure that protection from violence and support for victims also reaches women who are homeless and are often living hidden from public view. Read more in our [background paper](#).

Policy Paper: Peer Support: A Tool for Recovery in Homelessness Services

An increasing number of homeless services are developing peer support and peer worker roles (see definitions below). Peer support is well recognised by professionals in mental health and addiction services, where peer support has been widely used over the past few decades and considerable knowledge has emerged about the approach. Given that many individuals experiencing homelessness also often suffer from co-occurring mental health problems, substance use, and traumatic stress disorder, when developing peer support work homeless service providers can learn from research, practices, and policies used to deliver recovery-oriented care elsewhere. In this paper, we present experience and expertise regarding peer support by looking at the concepts and values underlying peer support, and by examining the difficulties and challenges involved in developing it. We will also give examples from across Europe of homeless organisations who train peers and use peer support as part of their care and support teams. Peer support is developing to different degrees in different contexts. The aim of [this paper](#) is to help FEANTSA members understand the key principles, opportunities and challenges involved in setting up peer support, in order to inform their practices.

Policy Paper: End-of-life Care for Homeless People

Thousands of homeless people in Europe are at risk of dying prematurely. According to estimates, at least 453 homeless people died in France in 2013. The true number is likely to be much higher as experience of homelessness is not necessarily recorded on death certificates, so that the huge impact homelessness has on people's health and wellbeing, morbidity and mortality often goes unnoticed. While governments across Europe are drawing up ambitious strategies to end homelessness, there is a lack of statistics available about death among homeless people and very little is formally recorded about the thousands of lives lost across Europe due to homelessness.

The first section of [this paper](#) therefore aims at raising awareness of multiple morbidity and mortality among homeless people. The second part discusses the barriers that people who are homeless face to accessing end-of-life care and assesses the particular end-of-life needs homeless people can have. In its conclusion, the paper sets out key recommendations for both policy makers and service providers in the homelessness and healthcare sectors on how to improve end-of-life care for homeless people.

EUROPE NEWS

Social Policy Orientation Debate

European Commissioners Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue and Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility [held a debate](#) on EU Social Policy orientations on the 9th June, to discuss how EU policy can best address social and employment challenges in Europe. FEANTSA invited them to consider the Friends of Europe [recommendations](#) for a more equal EU.

EP Call for a Gender Equality Strategy

The European Parliament has [called](#) for an EU gender equality strategy, with a focus on domestic violence, the biggest cause of homelessness amongst women.

'Country-Specific Recommendations Fail Children'

In a [press release](#) published ahead of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting on the 18-19 June 2015 and in view of their expected approval of the Country-Specific Recommendations in reaction to the 2015 National Reform Programmes, the EU Alliance for Investing in Children expresses its deep concern that the European Commission's priorities fail to address the needs of children in the EU, in particular the over 26 million children¹ who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Criminalising Solidarity: Public Consultation

In a [public consultation](#) launched in mid-June, Social Platform asks whether service providers have ever felt pressure to exclude undocumented migrants from the services they provide. In 2002, the EU adopted a Directive to define what is meant by facilitating the entry, transit and residence of undocumented migrants in the EU. The Facilitation Directive (2002/90/EC) states that anyone who intentionally assists an undocumented migrant to enter or transit across the EU is breaking the law, as well as those who profit financially by helping undocumented migrants to reside in the EU. In many cases, this means organised smuggling rings, employers or landlords who seek to exploit undocumented migrants' vulnerable position. However, the Facilitation Directive does not rule out imposing similar sanctions on individuals or organisations that offer humanitarian assistance to undocumented migrants. More and more pressure is now being placed on service providers to report undocumented migrants, putting them in difficult situations that could lead to the suppression of moral conscience, financial penalties and arrest. Service providers should not have to bear the burden of acting as immigration officers. Social Platform is carrying out its public consultation in order to gather information about this anonymously and to send it to the European Commission.

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

The European Commission has approved the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) [operational programmes](#) presented by Member States and national partnerships are being established. Half of the programmes combine food and basic material assistance. The European Commission will present a mid-term evaluation of FEAD to the Parliament and Council by 31st December 2018.

Tackling the Social Determinants of Health

Tools developed by the Social Protection Committee Indicators Sub-Group to monitor health systems must include suitable social indicators if Member States are to reduce health inequalities, European, national and sub-national level policy must be

implemented to improve health equity. These are the findings of the [DRIVERS project](#), which ended this year. DRIVERS put forward four principles by which policy makers can ensure that policies are good for health and help reduce health inequalities: 1) the need for policies and programmes to be universal, 2) the need for them to respond to disadvantage, 3) the need to respect the rights of the people concerned and the importance of adapting interventions and policies to context, and 4) the need to use evidence to inform the design of policies.

WORLD NEWS

Institute of Global Homelessness Conference

On 1st and 2nd June, the Institute of Global Homelessness brought together more than 100 researchers, policymakers and human service practitioners from across 6 different continents at its conference, "[Homelessness in a Global Landscape](#)", in order to develop a framework for ending homelessness globally.

OECD Inequality Report

The long-run increase in income inequality not only raises social and political concerns, but also economic ones. It tends to drag down GDP growth, due to the rising distance of the lower 40% from the rest of society. Lower income people have been prevented from realising their human capital potential, which is bad for the economy as a whole. This [OECD book](#) highlights the key areas where inequalities are created and where new policies are required, including persisting gender gaps; the challenge of high wealth concentration, and the role for redistribution policies, among others.

MEMBER NEWS

Czech Republic: NADEJE Improves Medical Care for Homeless Women

FEANTSA member NADEJE (Hope) has increased its provision of obstetric and gynaecological (OB/GYN) care for homeless women to include free ultrasound examinations. This is an important development as access to routine medical care is extremely difficult for homeless people, especially women.

607 women used NADEJE's services in 2014. Difficult lifestyles and permanent high stress levels lead to OB/GYN problems. Preventive examinations and early detection reduce disease advancement and decrease treatment costs.

Denmark: Homeless Reform Should End Youth Homelessness

Projekt UDENFOR has developed proposals to encourage municipalities to draw up strategies to combat youth homelessness, such as sanctions for municipalities that do not prepare action plans for socially vulnerable young people, increase psychological care for young people at risk, replace referral to shelters with real homes and include public and private companies in social work or provide employment opportunities for young people at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless. Currently, only 23 percent of young homeless people have been given support by their municipality.

Since 2009 the number of young homeless people have increased significantly. In 2013, 1,755 young people aged 18-29 were homeless. For project UDENFOR, this shows that what have been doing until now does not work.

Project UDENFOR started its 2.5-year [Youth Project](#), which works with people who experience homelessness at a young age, in autumn 2014.

France: Migrant Reception Plan

FNARS has issued a [press release](#) in which it welcomes the French government announcement that it will open an extra 10,500 places in accommodation, housing and support for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and sees this as a positive step towards allowing people who have fled their countries and are faced with severe difficulties to access their fundamental rights.

FNARS hopes that these places will be made available quickly, so that camps do not reappear in Paris and other large cities and so forced evacuations from these camps cease. Solidarity NGOs are prepared to manage these places, which should be evenly spread around the country by involving local authorities. These accommodation centres must not put any conditions for obtaining a place, must be open 24 hours a day and no one must be forced back onto the street.

France: Heatwave Warning – FNARS Asks for Emergency Measures to Protect Homeless People

The heatwave which is beginning in France puts the most vulnerable rough sleepers at risk, as they are especially exposed to the risk of dehydration and stroke. At a time when the number of homeless people – often families with children – is on the rise, visible on the streets of big cities and the emergency shelter hotline is only able to find accommodation for half of its callers, FNARS asks for the State and local authorities to put special measures in place to protect homeless people from the heatwave. City authorities must open extra accommodation spaces immediately and help outreach teams that come into contact with homeless people, so that they can find the most vulnerable people, give out water and take them to places out of the heat. Local authorities must allow access to drinking fountains, free public toilets and public baths for the most socially-excluded people.

Solidarity NGOs stress that homeless people die as much in summer as they do in winter and the 'seasonal' organisation of accommodation which means that the State increases accommodation capacity in November only to close them again on the 31st March, putting people back on the street each year, has disastrous health and social consequences for those who are the most excluded.

Ireland: Rent Supplement Rates and Homelessness

The biggest reason for the rise in homelessness in Ireland is the number of families unable to meet the rents being charged by landlords, homeless charities have told the Irish government. Focus Ireland said 13 families in Dublin had slept in their cars or in other places unfit for habitation in March and April 2015 alone. The main reason families were unable to afford their rent was that the government mechanism to protect such families – rent supplements – had been allowed to fall well behind real market rents.

The Peter McVerry Trust said there were a number of major building projects on the way, but that there were still huge numbers of people in emergency accommodation that should be helped to move on from there.

The Irish Department of Social Protection said it recognised homelessness as "one of the most visible and distressing signs of the social impact of the crisis that has hit Ireland since 2008".

Ireland: Call for Immediate Action to Address Housing & Homelessness Crisis

The Simon Communities in Ireland have [warned](#) that urgent and immediate action is required to address Ireland's worsening housing and homelessness crisis. The call comes as new figures from the *Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) Quarterly Rent Index* highlight rising rents, which are pushing the most vulnerable people into homelessness. The figures show an increase in private sector rents of 6.9% in the 12 months leading up to the first quarter of 2015. Apartment rents in Dublin alone rose by 10.8%.

Italy: Guidelines for Combating Exclusion

After a long process of meeting 12 Italian cities, running training and information sessions and collecting examples of good practice, as well as broad consultation by the cities with networks of public and private social services fighting poverty, fio.PSD has [drafted](#) Guidelines for Combating Severe Social Exclusion Among Adults in Italy, which will be presented for adoption to the State-Regional Congress by the Italian Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, with a view to designing social policy for combating poverty.

Slovakia: Four Prizes for Proti Prudu

Nota bene recently won four prizes: the [Sozial Marie](#) prize for social innovation for its [Luggage Porters employment project](#), the [Orange foundation social inclusion prize](#) for successful employment projects and fighting prejudice in society, the [Orange Foundation Prize for civic involvement](#) and the [Mental Health League prize](#), which praised the street magazine 'Nota bene' for its support of and quality reporting of topics related to mental health.

Spain: Street Count in Barcelona – Results and New Counts

On a [street count carried out on the night of the 26th May](#), Arrels Fundació counted 892 persons. Importantly, they did not cover the whole city. This was because they wanted to compare the results with previous data, which were gathered over the same areas in a count in 2011, which covered a large part of the city but not all of it. That is why Arrels maintain that there are a minimum of 892 persons sleeping rough in the city.

On the 30th June, Arrels will do another count, but only in the areas where they did not go in May. It is not known what the situation is in those areas, so this will be an opportunity to find out.

In July, they will explore difficult areas to count at night: the Montjuïc Mountain and the area called Les Planes. Experience and service user feedback shows that there are a lot of people sleeping and living there, but this will be the first time Arrels approaches the area.

Risks Crisis Entailed for Spain Brought Before UN Human Rights Council

An expert from Caritas Spain, Sonia Olea Ferreras, spoke at the 29th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva within the scope of the [Universal Periodic Review \(EPU\) of Spain](#). In her statement, the Caritas Spain representative [warned about the risks the crisis has entailed regarding access to and protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable](#), especially with respect to housing, migration, protection of public security and international cooperation.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a mechanism established by the Human Rights Council (the Council) aimed at improving the human rights situation in each of the 193 member countries of the United Nations.

Ukraine: Search for Funding

Ukrainian FEANTSA Member Social Partnership has set up a 'Rescue Service' (outreach) for homeless people. It is the only project of its kind in Ukraine. The project is needs funding to keep going. Anyone interested in supporting the initiative can contact Olena Polishchuk kig@socpartnerstvo.org

UK: England Faces 'Homelessness Crisis'

Official figures in England showed that numbers of households in temporary accommodation have reached 65,000 - the highest since 2008. 13,520 households were accepted as homeless in the first three months of this year, 8% more than the same period in 2014. 2,570 families with children were living in emergency accommodation - 35% more than in the first quarter

of last year and the highest since 2003. NGOs say that high rents and cuts to housing benefit were to blame, pointing to figures showing that the largest single cause of homelessness - cited in 29% of cases accepted by councils - was the loss private rented accommodation.

Crisis say that England is "sleepwalking into a homelessness crisis" and calls on the government to be clear about what it is going to do about it.

Homeless Link is concerned that the economic recovery is not being shared by all and leaving behind the most vulnerable, especially in light of figures last week showing a 16% rise in rough sleeping in London.

HEADLINES

France: Homeless Children

More than 3 million children, or 1 in 5, are living below the poverty line in France. 30,000 are homeless, 9,000 live in slums and 140,000 drop out of school each year, according to alarming figures published in a [Unicef report](#).

From 2008 to 2012, 440,000 more children and their families fell into poverty, because reactions to mitigate the effects of the crisis were "insufficient", says the report. Many of them "experience multiple disadvantage with disastrous consequences for their future and for the future of society".

Poland: Access to Housing stock for Housing First Programmes in Poland

This [analysis](#) (with a summary in English) examines the possibilities of acquiring appropriate housing stock for the purposes of "Housing First" programmes in Poland. It analyses in what way Housing First principles could be satisfied if various housing resources (including those belonging to private owners, local authorities, the State Treasury, Social Housing Associations and those obtained through the 'protected housing' process) were used.

Spain: Observatory on Hate Crimes Against Homeless People

The Spanish [Observatory on Hate Crimes Against Homeless People](#), HATEnto, held a [seminar](#) in Barcelona on the 16th June. They have also published the first Spanish [report on hate crimes against homeless people](#). Learn more about the issue in this [video](#).

Spain: Basque Housing Law Guarantees Affordable Rent Levels to Low Earners

The Basque Parliament has approved Housing legislation that considers the temporary expropriation of flats to banks, introduces a tax on empty buildings, recognises the right to Housing and allows people with low revenues to opt to rent their property.

UK: Need for Better Links Between Public Health and Homelessness Prevention

The Scottish Public Health Network has published a [report](#) on homelessness and health in Scotland. "Restoring the Public Health response to Homelessness in Scotland" brings together the academic evidence and the service experience to provide a

route map for the Public Health service to engage in the prevention and mitigation of homelessness and its health consequences. The report revisits the UK National Health Service's role in improving the health of homeless people, particularly given the opportunities that integrating health and social care offers, and to explore the opportunities for the NHS to play a role preventing homelessness.

UK: Scottish City Council to Buy Mortgages to Tackle Homelessness

Dundee City Council in Scotland has approved a new scheme that will see the council buy homes from tenants in financial difficulty. The Scottish Government's Home Owner Support Fund allows owners with money problems to sell their property to the council and become rent-paying tenants. The Scottish Government will pay a maximum subsidy of 60% of the purchase price for the property set by open market valuation, with the local council meeting the rest.

PUBLICATIONS

What I Learned from Being Homeless

We have been sent this [blog entry](#) from a person who was homeless in the Netherlands.

Positive Results of Project to Humanise Accommodation Centres

Launched in 2008, the French programme to humanise accommodation centres is based on the realisation that some homeless people refuse to use accommodation centres because of a lack of hygiene, privacy and safety there. The project thus intends to put in place ways to make the centres more 'human', privileging respect for the dignity of people staying there. This [interim report](#) gives a positive assessment of the progress made since the project began.

The study shows that the work has had a significant effect on conditions in the accommodation centres, bringing them up to housing standards. This means that the number of places in emergency shelters dropped significantly (from 23% before the work began to 3% afterwards), to be replaced by individual rooms (which went from 34% to 42% of provision), double rooms (from 21% to 24%) and self-contained apartments (from 22% to 31%). More than half of the services (56%) used the move to humanise their services as an opportunity to change their service provision. Almost half improved their social support provision as well.

Solutions from the Frontline

People with multiple needs including those affected by homelessness, substance misuse and mental health problems are not getting the support they need because policy makers aren't consistently listening to them or the practitioners that support them, according to a new report.

'[Solutions from the Frontline](#)', published by a coalition of UK charities, is based on the ideas and experiences of their service users. It sets out how the new UK government, as well as national and local policy makers and commissioners, can act to reduce stigma, improve services, and support people to achieve their ambitions.

Prison Leavers and Homelessness

A Scottish study, [Prison leavers and homelessness](#) examines the relationship between homelessness and offending, the impact of prison, key challenges and gives messages for practice. It forms part of the [Homelessness: pathways and prevention project](#), the next phase of which will focus on the value of peer-led and volunteer interventions.

A similar [study](#) carried out in Australia showed that almost half of all people released from the prison system become homeless. In the study, 42 per cent of 1,400 people who were homeless, or at risk of homelessness, had been released from

prison, juvenile detention or remand within the previous six months.

"The connections between prison time and homelessness suggest that there is a further role for policy makers to prevent the cycle between crime and homelessness," said the report leader.

The report found that rates of homelessness are also higher in areas with higher housing costs. Those who moved to areas with cheaper housing are more likely to exit homelessness.

Predictors of Substance Abuse Treatment Need and Receipt Among Homeless Women

Many homeless women do not receive needed treatment for substance abuse. This [study](#) identified social network and other predisposing factors associated with perceived need for and receipt of substance abuse treatment among 273 homeless women who screened positive for past-year substance abuse. Receiving treatment was more likely among women who received informational support from their partners and who had an arrest history but less likely among those who had a more street-based social network, had a minor child, considered themselves homeless, and recently needed mental health treatment. Treatment services researchers should attend more closely to social contextual factors, as well as the more traditional individual factors, to understand access and barriers to treatment.

Comparison of European and American Policy and Law on Cities and Affordable Housing

A [publication](#) in English and Spanish, resulting from an [international seminar](#) held by Georgia State University and the University of Barcelona in May 2014 compares European and American policy and law as regards cities and affordable housing.

The University of Barcelona can send free hard copies and CDs, both in English and Spanish to interested people and institutions.

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For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

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