



FEANTSA

**European Federation of National Organisations Working  
With the Homeless  
Press Release – 18th September 2013  
For Immediate Release**

**European Parliament Hearing on the Criminalisation of Homelessness in Europe**

“Criminalising and penalising homeless people for carrying out life-sustaining activities in public because there is nowhere to go is a problem across the EU” said Rina Beers, President of FEANTSA today at the European Parliament in Brussels.

FEANTSA, Housing Rights Watch and Sylvie Guillaume MEP (S&D – France) co-hosted a public hearing today to raise awareness about the criminalisation of homelessness in Europe.

Presenting to the hearing were groups from across Europe including, The City is For All from Hungary, Klimaka from Greece, and a coalition of NGOs from France (*Fondation Abbe Pierre, Emmaus-Solidarite* and others). The City is For All presented their strategic litigation campaign which successfully overturned criminalising measures in Hungary last autumn, only to see the Hungarian Prime Minister amend the constitution to prevent such legal challenges in the future. “We will continue fighting to protect human rights for all people, including people who are homeless,” said representatives from The City is For All.

**Call to Action for the EU**

Members of the European Parliament are clearly concerned about the issue, as Ms Guillaume indicated in her opening statements. The NGOs and activists called upon the European Commission to take action and work together to address the issue. “While the measures that criminalise homeless people for having to sleep rough, or using public spaces may be set and enforced at local level, the EU institutions have an important role to play. The European Commission should recognise that measures that allow the criminalisation of homelessness violate human rights, and as such, violate the values upon which the EU is founded. Poverty is not a crime, it’s a scandal.” concluded Rina Beers.

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For more details or comments, please contact Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director [freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org](mailto:freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org) or +32 2 538 66 69

**Notes for Editors:**

1. FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless. It is an umbrella of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe. [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)
2. Housing Rights Watch is a European network of activists, academics, NGOs and lawyers from across the EU who are committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to housing to all <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article166&lang=en>