



FEANTSA FLASH  
March 2008

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For upcoming events and conferences, do not forget to visit the [FEANTSA Calendar of events!](#)

## FEANTSA News

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### ▶ [FEANTSA comments on the draft Block exemption regulation in the area of State aid](#)[02/04/2008]

The European Commission is currently [reforming its state aid regulations](#). One of the main aims of this reform is to create a simple, user-friendly and coherent set of legislative rules applying to those types of aid which can be considered to be compatible with the EU treaty and European competition rules.

In the [draft block exemption Regulation](#), the Commission declares that certain categories of state aid, including employment aid for disadvantaged and disabled workers, are compatible with the Single Market and shall not be subject to the requirement of prior notification laid down in Article 88(3) of the EC Treaty. The Commission asked relevant stakeholders to comment on the draft regulation. In its response to the consultation, FEANTSA highlights the need to ensure that people who are homeless can actually benefit from employment aid for disadvantaged and disabled workers.

You can read the full response [here](#).

For further information, please contact Silke Paasche at [silke.paasche@feantsa.org](mailto:silke.paasche@feantsa.org)

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### ▶ [FEANTSA Calendar of initiatives on homelessness measurement](#)[31/03/2008]

Over the last few years, the FEANTSA [Data collection working group](#) has been gathering and exchanging information on homelessness data collection initiatives across Europe. At the end of last year, the group decided to launch an [online calendar](#) of homelessness measurement initiatives which is now accessible to all on the FEANTSA website. The aim of this calendar is to provide a basic overview of different initiatives taking place at local, national, European level on homelessness data collection (such as surveys, revisions of client record systems, street counts). This calendar provides only basic information about a given initiative, therefore you are invited to contact the FEANTSA secretariat or the members of the Data collection working group for any specific and detailed information on the initiatives listed in the calendar.

If you would like to add anything to the Calendar on initiatives taking place between 2008 and 2010, please contact Liz Gosme [liz.gosme@feantsa.org](mailto:liz.gosme@feantsa.org) from the FEANTSA secretariat.

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### ▶ [FEANTSA Call for Papers – European Research Conference ‘Good Governance: the key to effective homelessness policies’, The Hague, 19 September 2008](#)[31/03/2008]

Governance is an important focus of current research into homelessness. This conference, organised in conjunction with UMC St Radboud and Federatie Opgang, will be a unique opportunity for transnational exchange and networking on the theme of governance, and more specifically on the following 4 sub-themes:

- Good governance in service provision
- Participation of people who are homeless
- Prevention of homelessness
- Role of public policy

There will be workshops on the above 4 themes where researchers will be able to present their papers. Abstracts should be sent to the chair of the organising committee [William Edgar \(mailto:w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk\)](mailto:w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk) by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

For more information please contact [William Edgar](mailto:w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk) for research related questions and [Christine Lambert \(mailto:christine.lambert@feantsa.org\)](mailto:christine.lambert@feantsa.org) for organisational questions.

► **FEANTSA Staff News**[31/03/2008]

FEANTSA welcomes its new Communications Officer, Charlotta Odland. A Swedish-English national, Charlotta is delighted to join the team at FEANTSA, and looks forward to receiving news and updates from members. She can be emailed at [charlotta.odland@feantsa.org](mailto:charlotta.odland@feantsa.org). Silke Paasche, who was Communications Officer is now Policy Officer, responsible for the Employment and Participation working group.

Other staff responsibilities have also recently changed; Stefania Del Zotto is now responsible for Housing Rights and the Health and Social Protection working group, while Liz Gosme is now responsible for the Data Collection working group, EU strategy on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, as well as for the issue of Social Services of General Interest.

FEANTSA would like to take this opportunity to thank former Policy Officer Dearbhal Murphy, who left FEANTSA in March, for the dedication and professionalism she showed in her four years with the Federation, and for the exceptional work she carried out in building up the health and participation working groups. We wish her all the best in her new position as Deputy Secretary General for FIA – the International Federation of Actors.

► **FEANTSA website: Updated "Lobbying" section**[31/03/2008]

The Lobbying section of the FEANTSA 'Members Only' website has been updated. See [here](#). It now contains information and tools to enable members to participate in different FEANTSA lobbying campaigns, as well as information on who to contact at national and European level on homelessness.

For more information, please contact Liz Gosme [liz.gosme@feantsa.org](mailto:liz.gosme@feantsa.org)

► **The European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 1 December 2007** [31/03/2008]

The European Journal of Homelessness provides a critical analysis of policy and practice on homelessness in Europe for policy makers, practitioners, researchers and academics. The aim is to stimulate debate on homelessness and housing exclusion at the European level and to facilitate the development of a stronger evidential base for policy development and innovation. The journal seeks to give international exposure to significant national, regional and local developments and to provide a forum for comparative analysis of policy and practice in preventing and tackling homelessness in Europe. The journal will also assess the lessons for Europe which can be derived from policy, practice and research from elsewhere.

To download, please go to FEANTSA's Research Forum [www.feantsa.org/forum](http://www.feantsa.org/forum). If you would like to receive a printed copy, please email Christine Lambert [Christine.lambert@feantsa.org](mailto:Christine.lambert@feantsa.org).

## News from the European Union

► **2008 programme for peer reviews in the field of social inclusion and social protection** [31/03/2008]

The European Commission has now finalised the 2008 programme for peer reviews in the social protection and social inclusion field. The exact dates of the reviews still have to be confirmed and some further changes in the composition of the groups can be expected. Every year since 2004, the European Commission has facilitated exchanges between national civil servants on different national social inclusion policies (including policies on homelessness, child poverty, minimum income, integration of ethnic minorities, and other societal problems) in the framework of its EU peer review programme. FEANTSA participated in the EU peer review programmes of 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, bringing a homelessness perspective to different peer review debates (see more [here](#)). In 2008, there will be no peer review on homelessness, but some of the other peer review themes may of interest to FEANTSA members.

See more on the [European Commission website](#)

See more on official [Peer Review website](#)

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► **Conclusions of the Conference 'Participation of young people with fewer opportunities'** [31/03/2008]

On 3-4 March, the European Commission organised in Brussels its first European event focusing on socio-economically deprived young people in Europe. Participants included representatives of national and local NGO's, youth workers and policy-makers who attended four workshops dealing with peer-learning, youth workers, ethnic minorities and migrants, and homeless young people. Key factors for working with disadvantaged young people were identified, and participants called for:

- Better two-way communication between administrative bodies and the people working directly with disadvantaged youth.
- Greater empowerment of young people together with an enhanced consultations process with youth workers.
- A tailor-made approach when looking for solutions, taking into consideration the particular situation of the young people concerned.
- Long-term relations to be built with disadvantaged youth
- Equal engagement by all Member States.
- More funding to be earmarked for ethnic minorities and migrants.
- More data to be gathered and more research to be carried out on the issue of homeless young people. Focus should be not just on housing, but also on providing life skills, support and assistance.

For more information see [here](#).

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► **Ending Street Homelessness in Europe: only 23 more signatures are needed by 10 April!** [31/03/2008]

At the end of the March plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, 371 Members of the European Parliaments (MEPs) had signed the Written Declaration 111/2007 on Ending Street Homelessness in Europe (see FEANTSA Flash for [January](#)). Thanks to this massive support, the request for an extension of the deadline for MEP signature to the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, was granted.

FEANTSA, its members and partner organisations welcome this excellent result and are determined to do their utmost to help secure sufficient support for this initiative to be successful. They call on MEPs, who have not yet done so, to sign the written declaration during the forthcoming EP part-session, which will be held on 9 and 10 April 2008 in Brussels. Only 23 more signatures are needed for it to be adopted.

The Written declaration is an excellent opportunity for the only directly-elected body of the European Union to show once again consensus and political courage for the respect and promotion of fundamental human rights across the EU.

Signing takes only one minute, but it makes a difference!

More information about the Written Declaration is available on the [FEANTSA website](#), and the section on campaigning tools available to FEANTSA's members has been updated.

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► **EU consultation on "Food Distribution to the Most Deprived Persons"** [31/03/2008]

The European Commission is inviting charitable bodies, government services, interested NGOs, and the general public to contribute to an internet consultation on the future of the EU scheme to distribute free food to people in need in the Community.

For the last 12 years, the European Commission has run a Food Aid scheme for the most deprived people in the European Community, based on European intervention stocks. However, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), has seen these stocks decrease drastically, thus necessitating urgent reform of the scheme. The aim of the consultation is to collect comments and feed-back to assess the possible options for the scheme's future. The consultation will run until the 14th of May.

For more information and to access the consultation questionnaire, click [here](#).

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► **Fundamental Rights Agency Appoints its First Director**[31/03/2008]

Morten Kjærøum from Denmark has been designated as new Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and will take up his post on 1 June 2008. Executive Director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights since 2002, Kjærøum is also a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Hague Process on Refugees and Migration. Members of the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties unanimously selected him as their first choice.

Says Mr Kjaerum, "It is an inspiring challenge and a great privilege to have been selected as the first director of this new institution. The Agency has a strong foundation on which to build a modern network organisation, strengthening human rights protection for people in Europe as well as creating a common European understanding of fundamental rights... there are challenges that we must address and we cannot be complacent. The Agency will address some of those challenges - whether in the field of anti-racism, minority rights, discrimination against disabled people for example, homophobia, protection of personal data, fundamental rights education, or with regards to the rights of the child, to name only a few."

Mr Kjærøum's term of office will be five years, which may be extended once for a period of not more than three years.

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► **Official launch of MPHASIS 2008-2009**[31/03/2008]

The two-year transnational project MPHASIS (Mutual Progress on Homelessness through Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems) was officially launched on 14 March 2008 in Budapest, with national Mphasis coordinators from 20 countries and the Mphasis research and coordination team present. This one-day meeting enabled all Mphasis partners to discuss the general objectives of the project, the ongoing work on homelessness measurement at EU level, the development of homelessness monitoring and measurement at national level in the participating countries, and the opportunities for mutual learning and for advancing homelessness measurement in different countries through MPHASIS.

Next steps:

Between June 2008 and June 2009, a national Mphasis meeting will take place in each of the 20 participating countries – the timetable of meetings will be available shortly. The Mphasis website will shortly be online, with information about both the Capacity-Building strand (namely the different national Mphasis meetings) and the Research strand (progress of the research on homelessness measurement). All national Mphasis coordinators will then meet again in September 2009, in a European conference open to all, to discuss the results of the national Mphasis meetings.

## News from our Members

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► **Ireland: Funding Freeze is Impacting on the Provision of Services for People who are Homeless in Dublin** [31/03/2008]

The Voluntary Network of homeless services in Dublin confirmed today that lack of adequate funding is impacting on the provision and development of day services and accommodation for people who are homeless in Dublin and if the situation continues it could act to undermine improvements made in recent years.

Network members maintained the recent Health Service Executive (HSE) decision to freeze funding at previous levels and to not provide any new development funding will make it impossible to meet the Government target of ending long-term homelessness by 2010.

The situation for some people who are homeless has worsened in recent weeks and the pressure on homeless services has mounted as currently up to 100 people can find themselves unable to access emergency accommodation on some nights and have to sleep rough in Dublin City Centre.

The Homeless Network, which consists of 23 organisations working to tackle and prevent homelessness in Dublin, maintains a lack of funding to cover essential staff costs means that one brand new long-term accommodation project to be run by Depaul trust in Dublin will be unable to open its doors as yet in the first quarter of 2008 as planned. This project would have provided 30 homes and help to move people on from emergency accommodation thus making more beds available in the emergency system.

For further information please contact: Roughan Mac Namara, [Roughan@focusireland.ie](mailto:Roughan@focusireland.ie), Focus Ireland

## Homelessness in the Headlines

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► **Belgium: UN Criticizes Belgium's Flanders Regions over Language Rules**[31/03/2008]

The U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has criticized Belgium's northern region of Flanders for refusing to offer public housing to people who can't speak Dutch and don't want to learn.

The panel expressed "concern that the Flemish Community adopted a decree on 15 December 2006 restricting access to social housing to persons who speak or make the commitment to learn Dutch." It also criticized the town of Zaventem for restricting the sale of public land to Dutch-speakers or people committed to learning Dutch.

The French community regards this rule as a way of keeping French speakers out of Dutch-speaking Flanders. However, the Flemish authorities argue that the rules were put in place to foster community spirit in the Dutch-speaking region, ensuring that everyone can talk to their neighbours. Flemish regional housing minister Marino Keuleu, the author of the scheme said he regretted that the UN had not contacted his office to ask for an explanation. "If it had done so they would know that it's just a social measure to improve the quality of life in public housing areas," he argued.

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► **France: March held to stop evictions without re-housing**[31/03/2008]

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, some 4000 demonstrators gathered on the Place de la République in Paris, to protest against the forced evictions which are likely to take place now that the winter period, the so-called 'trêve hivernale' is officially at an end. (In France, evictions cannot take place during this period.)

According to associations like the Dal (Droit au logement) or Cal (Comité Action Logement), some 120.000 households will be evicted this year. Dal's spokesperson, Jean-Baptiste Eyraud describes it as 'absurd' to put people on the street, when the Dalo law (the enforceable right to housing), legally requires the state to re-house them. In force since 1 January 2008, the Dalo law stipulates that the state has to house those evicted, the homeless and those living in poor conditions within 6 months of their dossier being opened, or face paying a fine.

The protestors also called for an end to the sale of social housing, after the Housing Minister, Christine Boutin, pledged to put 40.000 social tenements up for sale.

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► **Scotland: Changes to funding threatens to end key services to society's most vulnerable**[31/03/2008]

Dozens of charities across Scotland working to help former drug addicts and homeless people into employment are being forced to close key services, as an important funding stream ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

The New Future Fund, (NFF) a national funding package aimed at improving the skills of some 4500 people furthest from the labour market, including the homeless, will now end. Although the fund will be replaced by the Fairer Scotland Fund, many organisations say they will be unable to apply for other funds until the summer, and do not have enough money to keep them going in the meantime. The Salvation Army has already had to give staff redundancy notices.

Glasgow, which received almost half of the NFF funding is one of the areas worst affected by its termination, and many charitable organisations face closure. Says Iain Gray, Labour's spokesman on the voluntary sector, 'the Scottish National Party government should be offering immediate funding to ensure that these organisations can continue their work.'

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► **Spain: Madrid and Barcelona conduct census on rough sleepers**[31/03/2008]

Earlier this month, the city councils of Madrid and Barcelona organised a city-wide census on the number of people sleeping rough. Several hundred volunteers took to the streets on the nights of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of March, and completed data on every person they found sleeping outside.

The census was conducted to better understand the profiles of rough sleepers; age, sex, how many there are, where they sleep, what health issues they face and why they're sleeping rough. The last census in Madrid took place in January 2007, when it was established that 621 people were sleeping rough.

The Barcelona census was organised in conjunction with FEANTSA member, Fundacion Un Sol Mon de La Caixa. Pedro Cabrera, of the Universidad de Comillas in Madrid which is in charge of the scientific coordination of the project states that the profile of the average rough sleeper has changed considerably in the last few years. The average age has decreased and the number of foreigners has increased.

The full results of the census will be published this summer.

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► **UK: Cadbury Factory offers work to homeless people** [31/03/2008]

Cadbury, one of the UK's leading confectionery manufacturers is opening its factory in North Wales to offer work placements to homeless people as part of a new scheme inspired by the Prince of Wales.

The "Seeing is Believing" campaign asks companies to make an impact on local issues by working together, and Cadbury is one of 50 businesses in Wales taking part in the initiative.

Cadbury is using its involvement in the scheme to provide opportunities to help those experiencing homelessness and social exclusion to integrate back into society.

According to Jim Davies from Cadbury, the initiative is all about directing businesses into good practice and encouraging corporate social responsibility. With a focus on homelessness, Cadbury aims to negate the stereotype and judgment often levelled against people who are homeless, and give them the opportunity to be fully contributing members of society.

The work placement programme has already reported a number of successes from those who have undertaken it so far.

## News from the United Nations

### ► **New UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing Appointed**[31/03/2008]

Raquel Rolnik of Brazil has been appointed as the new UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context.

Mrs Rolnik is an architect and urban planner, and holds a PhD from the New York University. She is a housing policy, urban planning and land management expert, with over 30 years of experience in the fields of planning, management, implementation and evaluation of housing and urban policies.

### ► **Report on the implementation of the right to adequate housing**[31/03/2008]

Miloon Kothari presented his last report in his capacity as UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing during the 7th session of the UN Human Rights Council, which was held in Geneva from 3 to 28 March 2008. In the report, he reviews a series of issues ranging from the lack of legislation and implementation of the right to adequate housing to forced evictions or groups requiring special attention.

Homelessness is considered as being "one of the most visible and severe symptoms of the lack of respect for the right to adequate housing". Kothari mentions that homelessness is a reality in developed countries also. While recognising that causes for homelessness are diverse and multifaceted, he points out that housing affordability can be considered as being one of the trigger factors leading to homelessness today. In this context, low income households are more vulnerable. Kothari also points out that there is a general tendency to criminalise homelessness. To conclude, the report gives recommendations to address the current situation and improve the effective implementation of the right to adequate housing.

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

## Announcements

### ► **Call for information**[31/03/2008]

The Homeless Agency in Dublin is working on a common Holistic Needs Assessment and Care Plan which will be used across the statutory and Voluntary sector in the greater Dublin area. It seeks to ensure that the needs of people who are homeless are assessed at the 'earliest opportunity' (Key to the Door Strategy on Homelessness).

Should you have any information evaluation on this topic, then please contact Mary Jennings, email: [maryj@eircom.net](mailto:maryj@eircom.net).

## Publications

### ► **Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU: Current status and way forward** [31/03/2008]

Using commonly agreed indicators, this report, drafted by the EU Social Protection Committee identifies the predominant factors affecting child poverty in each country of the EU. The report also reviews the national monitoring and evaluation systems in place and draws 15 recommendations to better assess and monitor child poverty and the multiple dimensions of child well-being across the EU.

Download [Report on Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU](#)

Download [FEANTSA report on child homelessness](#)

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► **New MHE Publication: "From Exclusion to Inclusion – The Way Forward to Promoting Social Inclusion of People with Mental Health Problems"**[31/03/2008]

This report presents an overview of the situation of social inclusion of people with mental health problems across 27 Member States of the European Union – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The report aims to explain the specificity of mental health and mental illness, and to highlight the mechanisms that prevent people with mental health problems in many cases to be active citizens who can participate and contribute to the community and society in which they live. It sets out concrete suggestions that can help professionals and policy makers to strengthen the framework for national strategy development and policy coordination within and between the Member States in Europe on issues relating to this particularly vulnerable group.

The publication "From Exclusion to Inclusion – The Way Forward to Promoting Social Inclusion of People with Mental Health Problems" can be downloaded [here](#).

For further information please contact the MHE Secretariat: Email [info@mhe-sme.org](mailto:info@mhe-sme.org)

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► **UK: Reducing Re-offending Housing and Housing Support Resource Pack**[31/03/2008]

This updated framework is intended for all stakeholders involved in the offender housing world. At a national, regional and local level it seeks to help support the development of partnerships and agreements which will improve housing outcomes for offenders, contribute to the reduction in re-offending and enhance public protection.

The full Resource Pack is available [here](#).



**The FEANTSA Flash is supported by  
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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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