



FEANTSA FLASH
May 2008

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FEANTSA News

▶ **FEANTSA Answers Consultation on “Food Distribution to the Most Deprived Persons”**[5/29/2008]

Earlier this month, FEANTSA sent a contribution to the online consultation on the future of the “Most Deprived Persons Food Distribution” Programme (for details, see March Flash). FEANTSA believes that everyone has a right to adequate food and agrees that the EU has an important role to play, together with Member States, to combat social exclusion, improve public health and ensure that everyone’s basic needs are met.

Although FEANTSA agrees that the free distribution of food to the most deprived can contribute to these aims, it highlights in its response that food distribution should be seen as an emergency answer to a situation, which should remain exceptional and temporary. FEANTSA thinks that meeting food needs of excluded and deprived people should be seen as a first step towards their full reintegration into society. In this context, food aid should be structurally linked to a broader policy framework, both at EU and Member State level.

To read the full contribution (available only in English), please click [here](#) (under policy statements/ health and social protection.)

▶ **FEANTSA Call for Papers – European Research Conference ‘Good Governance: the key to effective homelessness policies’, The Hague, 19 September 2008**[5/29/2008]

Governance is an important focus of current research into homelessness. This conference, organised in conjunction with UMC St Radboud and Federatie Opvang, 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 chairs of the organising committee William Edgar (w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk) and Judith Wolf (J.Wolf@sg.umcn.nl) by 30 June, 2008.

For more information please contact William Edgar or Judith Wolf for research related questions and Christine Lambert (Christine.lambert@feantsa.org) for organisational questions.

▶ **Save the date! FEANTSA European Conference: People who are Homeless can be Housed, Cardiff, 13-14 November 2008**[5/29/2008]

This year FEANTSA's European Conference will look at housing solutions for people who are homeless. It is organised in cooperation with Welsh FEANTSA member Shelter Cymru and will take place in Cardiff, 13 - 14 November 2008.

The FEANTSA European Conference will be an opportunity to:

- Explore effective housing solutions for people who are homeless
- Discuss the role of social housing operators and private landlords in providing housing for people who are homeless
- Examine the potential of a justiciable right to housing
- Learn about the prevention of homelessness through housing measures
- Analyse homeownership as a solution to homelessness
- Meet homeless organisations, policy makers and housing experts from across the European Union and beyond
- Participate in five interactive workshops
- Compare local housing projects with similar initiatives from across Europe
- Access the latest publications and research on homelessness
- Present your organisation and its work in the Information Forum
- Understand how to get involved in FEANTSA's activities in related areas such as campaigning, health, employment, participation, data collection and housing rights

The draft programme and the registration form are available on the FEANTSA website.

For more information, please contact Silke Paasche, silke.paasche@feantsa.org

To register, please contact Christine Lambert, Christine.lambert@feantsa.org

► **FEANTSA Website Survey**[4/30/2008]

Please take a moment to fill in the FEANTSA website survey, to help us further improve the layout and content of our website.

Please find the website survey [here](#).

News from the European Union

► **7th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty**[5/29/2008]

The 7th European meeting of People experiencing Poverty, organised by the Slovenian Presidency, took place on 16 and 17 May 2008 in Brussels. Every year, the European Commission, the EU Presidency and the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) co-organise such a meeting with the aim of listening to people experiencing poverty, and to establish a dialogue with policy makers at European and national level.

Delegations from all EU member states participated in the meeting which was organised around four key topics: Minimum income, housing, social services and services of general interest.

In the final plenary session, problems of housing exclusion in the European Union were highlighted as well as the need to ensure the right to decent housing for all. The delegations called on the European institutions to follow-through on the recently adopted [European Parliament Written Declaration on Ending Street Homelessness in the EU by 2015](#) and to make housing and homelessness a priority for the EU social inclusion policies in 2009.

The FEANTSA office and several of its member organisations were involved in the preparation and organisation of the meeting at national and European level.

► **Council of Europe: Commissioner Hammarberg Publishes Issue Paper on Housing Rights**[5/29/2008]

The latest issue paper published by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Hammarberg, "Housing rights: the duty to ensure housing for all," focuses on housing rights and titles. Issue papers are intended to highlight the human rights dimension of specific topics and provide information for further reflection and debate.

The document, which is a follow-up of the expert workshop on housing rights that Mr. Hammarberg organised in Budapest in September 2007, gives an overview of the current situation and context, including obstacles to accessing housing and gaps in housing rights protection, and reviews existing international tools relevant to the protection of housing rights and interesting ongoing initiatives, both at national and international level. To conclude, Commissioner Hammarberg proposes a series of recommendations for the national implementation of housing rights, which are key for the enjoyment of all other human rights.

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

► **European Commission studies on social inclusion – new calls for tender** [5/29/2008]

The European Commission has published a number of calls for tender for studies on social inclusion in Europe. These studies are commissioned with a strong policy focus, in areas where [National Strategic Reports](#) have revealed a greater need for European exchange and debate. Recent calls include a study on "Active inclusion of migrants", a study on "Housing exclusion: welfare policies; housing provision and labour markets", a study on "Stakeholders' Involvement in the Implementation of the Open Method of Coordination in Social Protection and Social Inclusion ", and a study on "Child Poverty". See more detailed information on the calls for tender on the European Commission [website](#).

For examples of EU studies on social inclusion which have been published over the last few years, see more [here](#).

► **European Parliament Publishes Study on Health Care Financing** [5/29/2008]

Following a request by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Economic and Scientific Policy Department of the European Parliament has issued a study on Health care financing in the context of social security.

The study reviews issues such as sustainability, the way health care is financed in the European Union and health care financing reforms. The final section of the study gives examples of reforms, which are most likely to enhance sustainability, as well as policy recommendations.

See here to read the [full version](#).

► **Members of European Parliament Discuss How to Promote Social Inclusion** [5/29/2008]

Earlier this month, a public hearing was held by the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee on a coordinated EU approach to the fight against poverty.

In her opening remarks, rapporteur Gabriele Zimmer (GUE-NGL) stated that 'a sufficient income support and active participation in the labour market' should be principles common to all EU national strategies to reduce poverty.

Representatives of social NGO's were invited to make comments. Freek Spinnewijn, representing FEANTSA asked MEP's to consider the concept of 'active social inclusion' and question what it means for those who will never be in employment, for example. Furthermore he highlighted the issue of extreme poverty, and the real need for the most excluded in society to be part of exclusion policies.

The vote is on the committee agenda for 10 September and in plenary in October.

See here for [Draft report on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU](#).

News from our Members

► **Ireland: Focus Ireland Launches Campaign for Statutory Right to Aftercare for Young People** [5/29/2008]

FEANTSA member Focus Ireland has launched a campaign calling for a statutory right to aftercare for young people leaving care to help prepare them for independent living and prevent them from becoming homeless.

Currently, when a young person turns 18, there is no legal obligation for the State to provide aftercare and services to help them make the successful transition to adult life. Focus Ireland's research "Left Out On Their Own" in 2000 found that a majority of young people failed to make a successful transition to independent living after leaving care and many of them ended up becoming homeless.

The call came as Focus Ireland Life President Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy opened a new accommodation project for young people leaving care which is run by the charity in Dublin city centre. There are over 5,000 children and young people in care in Ireland today and Focus Ireland has been working to play its part in meeting the needs of young people leaving care through a small-scale project for women based in Dublin for some years.

The new project, called "Chéad Chéim" ("First Step") provides apartments for young people aged 18-21 where they live in a supported environment for a year after leaving care with the help and support of Focus Ireland's professional staff. Young people are encouraged to participate in training to support the further development of life skills, build their confidence and also undertake education and work programmes.

This service has been made possible due to the support of the Health Service Executive (HSE) along with support from the Irish Youth Foundation and Dublin City Council.

► **Scotland: SCSH Report - Managing Homelessness without Housing**[5/29/2008]

A new report 'Managing Homelessness without Housing', published by FEANTSA member Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) looks at the experience of four local authority areas in Scotland following stock transfer. The report shows that in the Scottish councils that have transferred their housing stock, homelessness services are generally just an afterthought.

Amongst the findings of the report are:

- That with the exception of Argyll and Bute council little attention was paid to how homelessness would be managed after the transfer
- Stock transfer uncovered the true costs of managing homelessness, much of which had been included in the housing management costs of local authorities before transfer
- There are significant weaknesses in monitoring what happens to homeless people in transfer authorities, with a confusion of formal and informal referrals
- Stock transfer landlords tend to accept a higher proportion of homeless households than other housing associations and registered social landlords.

SCSH Chief Executive Robert Aldridge says 'This important piece of research demonstrated clearly the importance of considering how homelessness will be managed before stock transfer take place. '

See [here for more information](#).

► **UK: New National Strategy to End Rough Sleeping**[5/29/2008]

The UK Government is currently developing a new national strategy to end rough sleeping and to help homeless people move on to independent lives. FEANTSA member, Homeless Link, is currently consulting members on their views on the key issues that should be addressed in the strategy, and will reflect them in their response and continued dialogue with Communities and Local Government (CLG.) Homeless Link's Director of Policy, Practice and Campaigns, Dominic Williamson, will be seconded to the CLG as from June on a short-term basis to help develop the strategy on ending rough sleeping.

► **UK: OSW Report - The Right Deal for Homeless People**[5/29/2008]

FEANTSA member OSW has launched its new report - The Right Deal for Homeless People: Working towards suitable, sustainable and progressive employment. The report demonstrates a model of holistic, coordinated employment support for the most disadvantaged that, if funded and delivered in the right way, can enable more homeless individuals to achieve sustainable, progressive work. The Right Deal model can also significantly reduce costs for government, and demonstrates the economic and social benefits of such investment.

The Right Deal was developed with the support and input of Business Action on Homelessness, Crisis, East Thames, The Foyer Federation, Race on the Agenda, St Mungo's Association and Working Links.

Download the [Right Deal for Homeless People](#) report here.

For further information contact Michael Fothergill, michaelfothergill@osw.org.uk

Homelessness in the Headlines

► **Czech Republic: Prague Prepares Action Plan to Deal with Homelessness**[5/29/2008]

Prague City Councillor for Social Policy, Jiri Janecek has recently revealed an action plan for dealing with homeless people. If approved it will be the first plan for tackling homelessness in the Czech Republic. There are about 2000 homeless people in Prague, and the plan would make health checks, retraining courses and accommodation available to many of them.

Worryingly though, when announcing the plan, Janecek said that the need for it stems from the fact that homeless people are vectors of disease, criminality and arson. He also stated that those who underwent training and got jobs through the city of Prague, but then left their jobs would be put on a 'black list.'

► **France: The Enforceable Right to Housing is Applied for the First Time**[5/29/2008]

On 20 May 2008, the French courts ruled in favour of a poorly housed family under the enforceable right to housing (the Dalo). Introduced to French law on the 5th of March, 2007, this is the first time the law has been invoked. The administrative tribunal of Paris ruled in favour of a poorly housed family, whose appeal had been rejected by the prefecture. The commission in charge of following the files of people who are homeless or in inadequate housing, had originally declared that the family's case was 'not urgent'. The judge, however, ruled that the case of a young mother and two, small children who had been living in a shelter for a number of months, was in fact urgent.

For organisations working with the homeless, the court ruling is heralded as a small victory. Says Jean-Baptiste Eyraud, President of Dal, an association fighting for housing rights, 'this is encouraging; it opens up avenues for all those who have had their files all-too-hastily rejected.'

By the 31st of March 2008, nearly 19 000 housing appeals had been submitted in France, 68% of which were in the Paris area alone. Of these, only 3 100 have been examined to date. The gap between the number of files submitted and the number of files examined is partly explained by the fact that a very high number of files have been classified as inadmissible, due to incomplete or inaccurately filled-in forms. This begs the question as to what is being done to help people fill in the complicated Dalo paperwork.

► **Germany: Draft Federal Report on Wealth and Poverty Looks at Living Situations of People who are Homeless** [5/29/2008]

The German Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs has presented its draft report "Living situations in Germany – 3. Report on Poverty and Wealth of the Federal Government", which will be discussed by the German Government at the end of June 2008.

One section of the report specifically deals with the living situations of people who are homeless. The Ministry refers to estimates of German FEANTSA member BAGW and states that in 2006 approximately 245,000 people were homeless in Germany. This constitutes a significant reduction compared to 2003 (310,000).

BAGW has submitted a detailed response to the draft report, in which it welcomes the attention paid to people who are homeless in the draft report, but highlights a number of important shortcomings in the description of the living situation of homeless people. Inter alia, BAGW points out the failure of the report to mention:

- The difficult employment situation of people who are homeless which is closely related to the experience of homelessness and the lack of supported employment opportunities for people with multiple needs. Approximately 80 % of this group are unemployed and more than two thirds long-term unemployed.
- The extreme income poverty of people who are homeless. Two thirds of this group are indebted and more than half of this group do not have their own bank accounts.
- The growing number of young people who are homeless or at the risk of becoming homeless.
- The difficulty in accessing health care, which is related to the introduction of a set fee for doctors' appointments and the difficulties of people who are homeless to apply for exemption of these payments
- The number of households who are at risk of becoming homeless (i.e. between 60,000 – 120,000 households)

In their response, the BAGW calls on the German government to develop a national action plan on ending homelessness and to introduce the justiciable right to housing, stating that no eviction can be executed without the provision of alternative and adequate accommodation.

► **Poland: "Roofs Over Heads" Campaign is Launched**[5/29/2008]

A group of non-governmental organisations in Poland have recently launched the "Roofs Over Heads" ("Dach nad Głowa") campaign to improve social housing. The campaign's objectives are to increase awareness of the growing problem of inadequate housing which currently affects millions of Poles and to encourage public debate amongst experts, politicians, authorities, non-governmental organisations, and the media. The desired outcome of the campaign is for the development of a national housing programme which will include housing solutions for deprived Polish people, for whom a home is often an unattainable asset beyond their financial capabilities.

As many as 6.5 million Poles live in substandard conditions (no heating, no plumbing, too little space per capita). 11.9 million live in overcrowded dwellings, (i.e. flats with over 2 persons per room), while 3.2 million families do not possess their own home. Market research carried out prior to the campaign launch, indicates that the problem with housing (little housing available to the poor, substandard conditions) is perceived to be the third most pressing problem in Poland, ranked just below homelessness and alcoholism & drug addiction. Almost all respondents (96%) thought that the government has not done enough to improve Poland's housing situation.

The campaign will be advertised across Poland this summer, while several public debates are scheduled for the autumn. Lobbying efforts are at full steam. Says Dorota Binkiewicz, a campaign coordinator from Habitat for Humanity Poland, 'we established a coalition, because we felt powerless fighting separately against the vast range of poverty housing. With time, the group of non-governmental organisations was joined by experts. Discussions and meetings emphasised the need for working out and introducing systemic solutions. To change is too little, as there is too little to change. Housing policy does not exist - it must be created.'

For more information, go to <http://www.dachnadglowa.org/>, or email Dorota Binkiewicz, kampania@dachnadglowa.org

► **Spain: Help for People Experiencing Homelessness in Galicia is Woefully Inadequate**[5/29/2008]

Galicia, the autonomous community of Spain located in the northwest of the Iberian peninsula, has only 353 places in supported housing and shelters for a total of 4.000 people who are homeless. Furthermore, not one of the existing places is government run. All services that currently exist are run by associations, foundations and religious organisations.

In Coruna, the capital of the region, there are only eight supported housing flats, one shelter and a few subsidised canteens. Organisations are calling for a greater number of shelters which don't impose conditions for entry, and are lobbying for improved access to health care for homeless people. Furthermore, they're asking the regional government to put in place mechanisms to allow people to gain skills, employment and return to a dignified life. The Vice President of the regional government has revealed plans to build 6 reception centres and 16 reception and inclusion units in non urban areas.

► **The Netherlands: Homeless Sector Struggles with how to Help Homeless, Unemployed EU Migrants** [5/29/2008]

A growing number of migrants from Bulgaria and Poland are ending up homeless in the Netherlands, and for those that are unemployed, they have no rights to care or social benefits.

Since the 1st of May, 2004 when Poland joined the European Union, Poles have been able to move freely across Europe. Since the 1st of May 2007, they have also been able to work and live without restrictions in the Netherlands. However, if they are not in employment, they have no recourse to social benefits or emergency shelter. The city of Amsterdam is currently mapping the problem of foreigners without rights to social assistance, while the city of Breda is looking at what policies to adopt for homeless people coming from the new member states.

► **UK: Homeless Foundation Launched**[5/29/2008]

Tory leader David Cameron recently announced the setting up of the Homeless Foundation, which is to produce research into the causes of homelessness, and the wider impact on society.

Its purpose will be to build relationships with organisations that run support programmes for the homeless and come up with policy solutions. "It's unacceptable that one of the richest and most developed societies in the world has people living in dire and degrading poverty," Cameron said at the launch.

Big Issue founder John Bird, and Shelter's chief executive Adam Sampson, will be on the board that will run the Homeless Foundation.

► **UK: Private Landlords in London Help Homeless**[5/29/2008]

A new scheme in London offers landlords with one-bed and studio properties a chance to rent their flats for a guaranteed income, pay low running costs and experience minimal void periods, while helping to ease the capital's homelessness crisis. Run by Broadway, a UK homeless charity which provides support to people in London, the scheme has been very successful in persuading private landlords to rent to the homeless.

To take part in the scheme, private landlords register directly with Broadway's social enterprise, Real Lettings, or with a participating local authority (which for the moment includes Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Southwark, and Westminster). Broadway inspects the property, and vets potential tenants. Those selected move in on contracts which can run for up to five years, and the rent is paid out of their Local Housing Allowance. Tenants receive extensive resettlement training and are supported throughout the tenancy.

For homeless people, or vulnerable single people, the scheme gives them security and the guarantee of a fixed address for a number of years. For landlords, there is a guaranteed rent, which is increased in line with the Retail Price Index each year. Real Lettings covers all maintenance costs and returns the property to the landlord in its original condition.

To date, the scheme has housed almost 80 people in privately rented flats and aims to reach almost double that by the end of 2008. Says Howard Sinclair, the chief executive of Broadway 'It isn't the job of Broadway to do this. It should be a right to have a home, not a gesture from a charity. But it's a pragmatic response - and it's working well and it's helping people.'

For more information visit <http://www.broadwaylondon.org/> or <http://www.reallettings.com/>

Announcements

► **New European Health NGO Directory**[5/30/2008]

The European Public Health Alliance, of which FEANTSA is a member, is setting up a new European health NGO directory. It will contain information on all European and national level NGOs working in the field of health and will be directly accessible via the EU health portal. Inclusion on the database is free of registration or annual fees. The project is fully funded by the European Commission.

If you would like to be included in Directory, open the link below and follow the onscreen instructions:

<http://epha.http.eu/civicism/profile/create?reset=1&gid=2>

► **Request for Contact/Links – Homelessness and Sex Work**[5/29/2008]

Tyneside Cyrenians is a homelessness charity working in North East England. Tyneside Cyrenians' GAP Project provides individual and group support for women involved in sex work or sexual exploitation in Newcastle upon Tyne. This is a largely hidden population within the area which does not have a visible street sex market. The majority of the women Tyneside Cyrenians work with are homeless or have accommodation problems. GAP provides a holistic service to address a wide range of personal, social and economic needs, and helps with access to services such as drug and alcohol treatment, physical, sexual and mental health, housing and domestic violence. Support is offered using an 'assertive outreach' approach. Many of the women first get involved in prostitution as a result of their homelessness or housing need. Tyneside Cyrenians is very interested in making contact with groups or individuals who are looking at the areas of homelessness and sex work. Please contact Laura Seebohm, l.seebohm@tcuk.org

Please look under publications to access Tyneside Cyrenian's report 'Hidden For Survival.'

Publications

► **Annual Report of the Network on Income Distribution and Social Inclusion** [5/29/2008]

The Annual Report of the network on income distribution and social inclusion of the European Observatory on the Social Situation is now available.

The report reviews developments in income inequality and the risk of poverty across the EU on the basis of the data available at the time the analysis was carried out, i.e. in mid-2007.

It also examines in detail a number of aspects of income inequalities and the factors underlying these, issues which are not only of interest in itself but that are important for the formulation of effective policies.

See here for the [executive summary](#)

See here for the [full report](#)

► **Hidden for Survival – Homelessness and Sex Work**[5/29/2008]

FEANTSA member, Tyneside Cyrenians has recently published its report 'Hidden for Survival', a piece of peer research looking at the working lives of a group of sex workers in Tyneside. For the last two years, the project Gap has worked with women involved in sex work, and has explored their multiple needs around homelessness, drug and alcohol use and violence. The research, which has found that 40% of the women interviewed live in bed and breakfast accommodation or hostels and 21% have no fixed abode, is currently being presented at conferences in Newcastle, Glasgow, London and Manchester.

For more information, please contact Ollie Batchelor, o.batchelor@tcuk.org

Download [Hidden for Survival](#) report.



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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

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