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■ European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless AISBL
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Homelessness and housing exclusion in the National Reports on strategies for social inclusion and social protection (NRS)

FEANTSA Evaluation and Recommendations

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Introduction

After 5 years (2001-2005), the EU social inclusion strategy has been merged with the other separate EU strategies on pensions and on health to form a new single “streamlined” EU framework with three distinct pillars: social inclusion, pensions and health. FEANTSA monitors the pensions and health pillars, but is more interested in the priorities outlined in the “social inclusion” pillar which focus on various societal problems related to poverty and social exclusion, like homelessness and housing exclusion.

This short evaluation firstly examines the general policy progress on homelessness and housing exclusion under the social inclusion strategy (2001-2005), secondly focuses on the homelessness policy content of the recently submitted National Reports under the new streamlined strategy (2006-), and finishes with conclusions:

- I. Research and awareness raising on homelessness under the EU social inclusion strategy:
 - Agenda-setting through the National Action Plans on social inclusion (NAPsIncl)
 - Monitoring through data collection on homelessness
 - Understanding developed through definition of the problem
 - Understanding developed through research
 - Understanding developed through transnational exchanges
 - Important stakeholder involvement

- II. Policy developments under the new streamlined framework in the 2006-2008 NRSs:
 - Housing dimensions of poverty in the NRSs
 - Approaches to tackling homelessness and housing exclusion in the NRSs
 - Health and homelessness in the NRSs
 - Employment and homelessness in the NRSs

- III. Conclusions

I. Research and awareness-raising under the EU social inclusion strategy

Agenda-setting through the NAPsIncl process

Awareness of homelessness and housing exclusion, and the urgent need for action to tackle these, has improved over the last 5 years through the NAP process under the EU social inclusion strategy. Since the start of the social inclusion NAP process in 2001, there has been a clear change in the importance attached to homelessness and housing exclusion in the different EU countries as indicated in the evaluation reports produced by the European Commission: from homelessness and housing as urgent policy issues for *some* Member States (1st Joint Inclusion Report [2001](#)), for *most* Member States (2nd Joint Inclusion report [2004](#)), for *all* new Member States (Report on NAPsIncl of new Member States [2005](#)), to homelessness as one of the 7 key priorities for all 25 Member States (1st Joint Report Social Protection & Social Inclusion [2005](#)). The increased importance attached to homelessness under the EU social inclusion strategy is finally confirmed by the EPSCO Council¹ March 2005. In the conclusions of the Council meeting, all EU25 Employment and Social Affairs Ministers agreed that “treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness” is one of the key social inclusion priorities for the future (see [here](#)).

Monitoring through data collection

Over the past 5 years of the social inclusion process, work has been carried out on monitoring and measurement of homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe through transnational exchanges within and outside FEANTSA. Within FEANTSA, the Data collection working group (see [here](#)) has developed knowledge on existing NGO-based homelessness documentation systems, and on the basis of this knowledge FEANTSA will launch a Compendium of interesting homelessness documentation systems on its website (with examples from Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK and others). Through the European Observatory on Homelessness, FEANTSA has commissioned annual reviews of homeless statistics in Europe as a useful mapping exercise of existing data sources on homelessness which also contributed to the development of a European Typology on Homelessness and housing exclusion ([ETHOS](#) - see Annex for full typology). Eurostat and DG Employment have also commissioned some important research on the measurement of homelessness in Europe including the INSEE feasibility study on the production of data on homelessness and housing deprivation (see [here](#)), and the latest study on measurement of homelessness in the EU (to be published beginning of 2007) which will provide proposals for methodologies to measure homelessness at national level.

Understanding developed through definition of the problem

ETHOS has been a useful tool for monitoring and comparability of homelessness-related policies in the NAPs Inclusion.² This typology was developed under the EU social inclusion strategy by homeless service providers and researchers working under the FEANTSA umbrella, taking into account existing national and international definitions of homelessness and housing exclusion, taking into consideration the reality of homelessness on the ground, and the different realities of homelessness in EU25 countries.

ETHOS classifies homeless people according to their *living conditions* and therefore defines homelessness from a housing or “home” perspective. This typology was originally developed for statistical purposes and measuring pathways into homelessness, which is why this is a typology of homelessness *and* housing exclusion also looking at data collection on living situations which can lead to homelessness (important for preventing homelessness).

ETHOS has been used in the framework of the EU social inclusion process, namely within the peer reviews, and also outside the social inclusion process by various public bodies and organisations as a framework for research, policy analysis, and for discussions on measurement issues (see more [here](#)).

¹ The Employment and Social Affairs Ministers of EU25 convened on 3 and 4 March 2005 to discuss, *inter alia*, the future social inclusion priorities for the European Union.

² See 2005 FEANTSA Shadow Implementation Report [here](#); See 2006 report *ETHOS: Taking stock* [here](#)

Understanding developed through research on homelessness

Specific studies were commissioned directly by the European Commission, namely on access to housing for immigrants and ethnic minorities which shed some light on the difficulties of people in these living situations and proposed some suggestions for follow-up under the social inclusion pillar of the EU strategy.

Research on homelessness within the European Observatory on Homelessness has focused on thematic issues (the profile of homeless people, homeless service provision, the role of the state in homeless policy) and has also produced annual homeless policy and statistics reviews.

The outcome of research carried out over the last years has highlighted that homelessness is a process (rather than a static phenomenon) that affects many vulnerable households at different points in their lives. In many countries, there is now better understanding that in order to achieve policy objectives which aim to prevent homelessness and reduce its impact on vulnerable households requires information that reflects the reality of the process of homelessness and housing exclusion. Thus hidden forms of homelessness should be visible to policy-makers and service providers. This means having an understanding and measurement of homelessness which includes the situation of people who live in insecure housing, are forced to move constantly between inadequate housing situations and those who are forced to live in housing which is unfit for habitation by commonly accepted norms. This is also clear from the recently submitted NRSs (see more in section below).

There is also better understanding of the *causes* of homelessness as outlined in the table “Factors of Vulnerability and Risks of Housing Exclusion” of the 2005 Review of statistics on homelessness (Edgar et al). This table suggests a generic approach to understanding the causes of vulnerability that affect the risk of homelessness as divided into four principal factors: structural (economic processes, immigration, etc) institutional (allocation mechanisms, shortage of services), relationship (family status, relationship breakdown), and personal (ethnic status, disability, addiction, etc).

Understanding through transnational exchanges

Transnational exchanges under the EU social inclusion process have been crucial in ensuring a real impact on homeless policy-making. The NAPsIncl were used as a basis for organising peer reviews on homelessness (UK 2004, Denmark 2005, Norway 2006) between ministry representatives, and with the involvement of NGOs with expertise on the issue like RETIS, Eurocities and FEANTSA. Exchanges were also organised systematically within European networks such as RETIS (homeless peer reviews between cities), and within FEANTSA (immigration and homelessness, prevention of homelessness, networking and homelessness, health and homelessness, employment and homelessness, and others). Transnational projects on homelessness were also funded to promote mutual learning between a mix of different organisations working on the issue of homelessness.

Understanding of the importance of stakeholder involvement

As well as improving knowledge of the phenomenon of homelessness, the EU social inclusion process has clearly contributed to a stronger focus on the importance of cooperation with different actors for effective policy-making to tackle homelessness and housing exclusion. Many national and European policy developments on homelessness and housing exclusion are in fact the outcome of genuine cooperation between researchers, national administrations, national statistics offices, the European Commission, and homeless service providers members of FEANTSA. However, participation of homeless service providers in policy-making at national and local level is still to be strengthened in many EU countries.



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II. Policy developments in the 2006-2008 NRSs under the new streamlined framework

Research on homelessness over the past five years has shed light on pathways into homelessness and different causes of homelessness, and a number of countries have made use of this information in the 2006-2008 NRSs. The next section will **firstly** examine the ways in which the NRSs address the housing dimensions of poverty. The housing dimension is of particular interest given that it has been underdeveloped in the EU social inclusion pillar until now and yet is a fundamental element within any effective multi-dimensional approach to tackling poverty: without an adequate home to go to, nobody can benefit fully from any social, health or employment support programmes. **Secondly** it will map the different national homelessness and housing policies onto the ETHOS typology in an attempt to understand the target populations of such policies, and to compare policy proposals in this area within the new NRSs. **Thirdly**, there is a short analysis of policies outlined in the NRSs which address health-related problems of people experiencing homelessness. **Finally**, the report draws attention to policies focusing on the employment or meaningful occupation of people who are homeless.

The housing dimension of poverty

Under the new streamlined framework, the housing dimensions of poverty are mainly treated under the social inclusion pillar. Indeed, housing is considered in nearly all NRSs as part of the list of risks or needs that may give rise to social assistance or protection in accordance with the definition used in the 1996 ESSPROS manual.³ While some countries actually use the ESSPROS methodology to highlight their social protection expenditure (Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland), many countries also mention housing as an integral part of their anti-poverty strategy:

Estonia: "In promoting social protection and inclusion the Government is guided by the fact that in order to solve problems, it is necessary to provide coherence between policies in different fields - in particular, economic, education, employment, social protection, health care and housing policies." (p12)

Belgium : Conditions for good social security and social integration include an adequate income, employment, adequate training, good health, and adequate housing. (p58)

France : The French national social cohesion plan focuses on three priorities : promoting employment opportunities, improving housing policy, and tackling inequalities (pp 9-10)

Germany : There is a successful programme which is "supporting multi-objective projects in 37 neighbourhoods (as of 2006) that combine town planning measures with social policy, housing policy and economic and labour market policy goals and that create a social and cultural infrastructure." (p53)

Hungary : "A competitive economy requires a workforce that can be mobilized. This requires geographical, professional, and social mobility, which presumes appropriate housing, education/training, (mass) transportation, as well as care for members of the family." (p16)

Ireland : "Increased investment in key services [over the past 10 years], including employment supports, education and training, health care, housing and transport have also contributed to significant improvements in living standards." (p12)

Malta : "Poverty or risk of poverty impinges on various life aspects including employment, education, culture and leisure, housing and social welfare. As such factors are in turn likely to influence the level of social inclusion, they need to be addressed effectively and efficiently." (p10)

³ Paragraph 11 of the ESSPROS manual 1996: "General definition of social protection...The list of the risks or needs that may give rise to social protection is fixed by convention as follows: 1. Sickness/Health care; 2. Disability; 3. Old age; 4. Survivors; 5. Family/children; 6. Unemployment; 7. Housing; 8. Social exclusion not elsewhere classified."



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Slovenia : The problems of vulnerable groups “have to be solved by a combination of measures in the fields of employment, housing policy and social and health care services.” (p5)

Spain : In addition to the priority objectives in the Spanish NRS, the report also focuses on developing “measures designed to consolidate the progress achieved in other areas which are sensitive to social exclusion, such as housing, health, inclusion in the information society”. (p11)

Homelessness and housing exclusion have been selected as a **priority** under the social inclusion chapters of the NRSs for countries such as:

- Belgium : Ensuring decent and affordable housing for all
- Denmark: Housing as one of the key action areas
- Estonia : Housing policy 2007-2013 development plan
- Finland: Reducing homelessness is one of the official aims of Finnish housing policy
- France : Developing social housing and general accommodation supply
- Hungary: Reducing regional and housing disadvantages
- Ireland: Access to quality housing and accommodation services for all households as part of the “Housing Policy Framework – Building Sustainable Communities”
- Latvia: Improve access to housing for families with children, and for older people
- Luxembourg: Promoting access to housing
- The Netherlands: Addressing the problems of the homeless
- Poland: The development of social housing, night shelters and homeless shelters
- Slovenia: Ensuring housing for vulnerable groups
- Spain: Under “Other measures of access to all resources, rights and services which are needed to participate in society”: measures to tackle homelessness and measures on housing
- Sweden: Ensuring good housing and combating homelessness
- The UK: Access to decent and affordable housing.

It is interesting to note that housing also emerges in the NRSs:

- Under the social inclusion pillar as a priority means of **tackling child poverty** (Estonia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) and promoting the integration of migrants (Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden),
- Under the social inclusion or pensions pillar as important for **supporting older people** (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Austria, Latvia)
- Under the health pillar as housing services are often considered as an integral part of **the long-term care services** (Estonia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK).

Approaches to tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

A number of countries have indicated the importance of strengthening their general housing policies as a means of reducing homelessness and housing exclusion, thereby adopting a more structural approach to preventing and tackling homelessness rather than only developing separate solutions only for people experiencing extreme forms of homelessness. **Housing policies or strategies** outlined in the NRSs generally include the following elements:

- Stimulating a well-functioning housing market in order to promote access to decent and affordable housing: Estonia, Belgium, France, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia, Sweden, Norway
- Increasing social housing: Estonia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Lithuania
- Socialisation of the private housing market: Belgium, Spain
- Housing services for long-term care: Lithuania, Ireland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Sweden
- Preventing evictions: France, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, the Netherlands
- Strategies against ghettoisation: Denmark, Finland, Hungary
- Urban development/regeneration: Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Spain, Luxembourg
- General prevention (or eradication) of homelessness : Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands
- Emergency and rehabilitation services for people experiencing homelessness or housing exclusion : France, Denmark, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Belgium, Ireland, the UK, Sweden, Slovenia, Poland, Malta, Spain

These different housing-related measures outlined in the 2006-2008 NRSs target different categories of ETHOS. The profiles of people who are in any of the ETHOS living situations generally vary according to the country but can be experienced by women, men, children, families (national citizens, migrants, or ethnic minorities) who simply are lacking accommodation for short or long periods, or who may have additional needs including [health-related](#) problems (mental health, physical health, addictions), [employment-related](#) problems, debt problems or other needs. The following section maps the different national homelessness and housing policies outlined in the 2006-2008 NRSs onto the ETHOS typology in an attempt to understand and compare the target populations of such policies.

Measures for people who are **roofless**:

ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Rough Sleeping (no access to 24-hour accommodation) / No abode	
	2	People staying in a night shelter	2.1	Overnight shelter	

Many countries have integrated measures for roofless people in the “housing” section of their NRS such as developing or improving emergency services, as is the case in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, the UK.

The Czech Republic, Netherlands, and Spain rather have separate/specific strategies targeting roofless people. Czech policies for roofless people also target people in makeshift shelters (“shacks, outhouses, huts or stationary caravans”).

Rather than principally increasing emergency solutions, some countries focus more on finding immediate (alternative) housing solutions for people living on the streets as is the case in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands. As stated in the Danish NRS, people who are roofless often have complex problems and therefore need a place to live in order to benefit fully from other treatment programmes (health, employment, etc).

Health is an issue for roofless people in a number of countries. In Belgium (Brussels region), measures will be taken to raise awareness of roofless people on their health. The Czech NRS refers to the health of people who are roofless under the health pillar, and the need to improve access to healthcare for this target group (see more below in section on health).



In countries where official homeless policies and homeless services have not yet been developed, roofless people are often supported not through housing or homeless policies, but rather through health policies (drug addiction, mental health), youth policies and other related policies. In Malta, people experiencing rooflessness are included in target populations of policy measures on mental health, young people and addictive behaviour. In Greece, many roofless people are treated by health-related services.

Measures for people who are **houseless**:

HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 3.2	Homeless hostel Temporary Accommodation	
	4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation / reception centres (asylum)	
			5.2	Migrant workers accommodation	
	6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions	
			6.2	Medical institutions	
	7	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for homeless people	
			7.2	Supported accommodation	
			7.3	Transitional accommodation with support	
			7.4	Accommodation with support	

The concept of 'houselessness' is intended to capture the situation where people have a physical space to live - a roof over their heads - but this is a temporary situation in which they do not have a legal or permanent basis of residence (FEANTSA Statistics Review, 2005). In the NRSs, many countries have policies targeting most of the "houseless" living situations represented in ETHOS.

Temporary housing for people who have been living on the streets is especially being created and reinforced in France, Ireland, Czech Rep, Belgium, Sweden, Slovenia, Hungary, the UK, in Spain, and the Netherlands. Only few countries do not refer to policies to create or improve temporary accommodation for homeless people: Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg. One issue which emerges in the NRSs of Denmark and France is the ageing of homeless service users and how to provide more appropriate support to meet new needs (such as, in Denmark, alternative nursing homes for older homeless people who cannot be accommodated in existing residential facilities for older people due to the physical and mental nursing needs involved and active misuse)

Shelter facilities for women are an integral part of NRS homeless measures in the Netherlands, France, Slovenia, the UK and Spain where the gender dimension of temporary housing is very present. In the Netherlands, shelters for women are provided alongside social relief services for people experiencing homelessness. In France, emergency shelters and access to housing for women who are victims of domestic violence were promoted through measures under a global action plan 2005-2007 as part of the improvement of hostel accommodation and temporary housing aimed at rehabilitation. In Slovenia, as part of measures for housing and integration in the NRS, a network of maternity homes and shelters for women with total capacity of about 350 places should be up and running by 2010. In the UK, the Scottish homelessness action plan includes a response programme for women fleeing domestic violence. In other countries, such shelters for women are being set up but under different policy frameworks aimed specifically at victims of domestic violence rather than at people experiencing homelessness (see also category 10 of ETHOS).

People in accommodation for immigrants - It is important to monitor people in reception centres for immigrants because the shortage of such specialist accommodation for these groups can result in a significant increase in the proportion of immigrants using traditional homeless hostel services. However, few countries refer to this living situation in the NRSs. In France, the living situation of people staying in migrant hostels is causing concern given that many hostel clients are ageing and therefore require more support. The Spanish NRS includes the results of the 2005 study on the scope of homelessness in the country which outlines where homeless people are staying in Spain: Shelter or home 38,6, Centres for abused women 3,0, Internment centres for immigrants 2,8, Flat provided by an NGO or another agency 8,5, Accommodation paid by an NGO or another agency 1,4, Squatter flats 8,1,



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Public places 22,5, Chance accommodation 15,1. It is clear therefore that people living in accommodation for immigrants are monitored in Spain, and support for people in these situations may therefore develop in the future.

For **people leaving institutions or care**, countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Spain, the Netherlands have outlined measures. The Czech NRS states that “the most serious problems that people who have been released from institutional care or prison have to face are problems associated with housing.” As a result, young people in particular are being offered accommodation in *half-way housing* facilities. In Finland, data is collected on people in care institutions as a homelessness prevention strategy - emphasis is placed on building individual paths (transition from institutional care into everyday life). In the Netherlands, there is much focus on reducing homelessness following detention or following discharge from care institutions. In Spain, measures have been taken to offer places in hostels for prisoners on parole who have no home to go to. In the Bulgarian NRS, reference is made to measures for the improvement of the housing conditions for vulnerable groups such as persons leaving specialized institutions - the Bulgarian report draws attention to a good practice on training for young people leaving care institutions. Housing spaces are established as “Sheltered Spaces” where young people are placed for a period of 2-3 years before leaving the institution in view with teaching them to cope with an everyday life and to take responsibility of themselves.

Supported housing for homeless people is developing in a number of countries. In Belgium, a project (put forward as good practice in the Belgian NRS) is being funded to improve access to supported housing for people who are homeless. It is implemented in cooperation between homeless sector workers (both in emergency and supported housing) and social rental agencies. In Finland, special services for people who are homeless include “support accommodation, support homes, and small flats meant for independent living.” In Denmark, since July 2005 local authorities have been able to conclude agreements with social housing associations on making vacant social housing available for the local council, with these dwellings to be rented as *transition housing* for homeless people. The target group of the scheme consists of people in transition periods needing special conditions and assistance as they transfer from temporary residential facilities - such as a reception centre - to conventional rental housing. In Ireland, one of the 2006-2008 homelessness targets is, on the basis of established need, to promote and support the provision of long term accommodation and associated supports by way of social and voluntary housing, the private rented sector (including the use of the Rental Accommodation Scheme) and the provision of dedicated accommodation and support systems for those persons who are not deemed capable of independent living. The UK (England) has invested in preventative housing support services for homeless people through the Supporting People programme, and will continue to do so.

Measures for people who live in **insecure housing**:

INSECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	Temporarily with family/friends No legal (sub)tenancy Illegal occupation of building Illegal occupation of land	
	9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1 9.2	Legal orders enforced (rented) Re-possession orders (owned)	
	10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents of domestic violence	

People living in insecure accommodation - For those on a pathway into homelessness, living temporarily with family and friends is often a stage in the process and people of ‘no abode’ often move around between family and friends and sleeping rough or in night shelters. According to the NRSs, Finland seems to be the only country which collects data on people staying temporarily with family or friends. Regarding the other sub-categories of category 8, the measures principally concern travellers (Ireland and the UK) and Roma communities in many of the EU10 countries, Bulgaria, Romania, and some EU15 countries.



Eviction prevention is an important issue in most NRSs as a means of preventing homelessness, namely in the NRSs of Austria, France, Hungary, Sweden, Latvia, the Netherlands, and often in relation to families with children or older people. Both Austria and Sweden have put forward local eviction prevention programmes as examples of good practice. However, in Austria it is less clear what happens to people who *are* evicted (i.e. for whom the prevention programmes have not worked). NGOs provide support and advice to these people in emergency situations, but no financial compensation which effectively means that evicted people have to go through the same procedure for allowances or subsidies as anyone else within the schemes for "housing allowances" or income support, which are both the responsibility of the Länder. In Hungary, France and Latvia, the issue of indebtedness is quoted as creating risks of eviction and consequently homelessness. In the Hungarian NRS: "The extreme manifestation of housing poverty is homelessness...Indebtedness includes the dangers of homelessness. One of the biggest debt portfolios of the past decade is made up of the home loan and overhead debt of a part of the population. In order to manage and eliminate debt, as well as in order to provide homes and retain existing homes for families raising children in difficult circumstances, important steps have been taken in recent years that need to be continued and extended." In France the national social cohesion plan, as well as departmental plans for vulnerable groups on the housing market, include measures to prevent evictions through plans to reduce debts of people threatened with eviction. In Latvia, "Those [retired people] renting apartments in denationalised houses risk eviction from their apartments because of debts for rent or use of public utilities or because of the necessary overhaul works and their inability to purchase another apartment on the open market."

People living under threat of violence – Many countries have developed shelters and other temporary solutions for victims of domestic violence (mainly women and children), and these are often funded under homelessness budgets (see ETHOS category 4). In other countries, such shelters have been created but aimed specifically at tackling domestic violence, rather than prevention of homelessness since this living situation leads to more than just risk of homelessness. In Hungary, these living situations are monitored and tackled: With a view to combating violence within the family the restraining order as a coercive instrument in criminal cases has been enforced with effect from 1 July 2006 in Hungary. In addition, a system of institutions is being set up for providing shelter and help for battered or threatened parents and their children (a regional crisis management network) on the basis of temporary shelters for families. In Austria, the Länder also provide temporary accommodation to women and children subject to domestic violence at one of their women's shelters. Styria adopted anti-violence legislation under which every abused woman and her children are legally entitled to housing financed by fixed benefit rates. In addition, the Länder have children's shelters and apartments for immediate crisis intervention. In Malta, as well as the social work service offered to victims of domestic violence, together with the emergency shelters, this area has been consolidated through the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act on the 16th December 2005.

Measures for people who live in **inadequate housing**:

INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-standard structures	11.1 11.2 11.3	Mobile home / caravan Non-standard building Temporary structure	
	12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Unfit for habitation (under national legislation; occupied)	
	13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding	

People living in temporary/non-standard structures - Some policies of the NRS which are aimed at roofless people clearly mention that these initiatives also cover people living in makeshift and non-standard forms of housing as is the case in the Czech Republic. Although very few countries actually mention people in these living situations in their NRS, such people are often targeted by measures tackling rooflessness, especially people living in garden sheds, garages, and other non-standard buildings not intended for habitation. The Spanish NRS, as part of measures to promote social integration of immigrants, outlines programmes supporting decent re-housing of foreign workers who live in shanties or slums. In other countries like Hungary, the issue of living in temporary/non-standard



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dwelling is a priority for supporting the Roma community - in 2006, a pilot programme launched in 9 settlements with the goal to integrate *Roma families living in slums* into the society will come to an end. The Bulgarian NRS mentions the need to improve quality of housing, provision of appropriate housing and infrastructure for Roma people.

People living in unfit housing - A number of measures to tackle substandard housing are being taken in France, Slovenia, Denmark, UK, Malta. Some countries have set aside budgets to restore and renovate substandard buildings through urban regeneration of socially disadvantaged areas as is the case in Denmark and France. The Danish measures for socially disadvantaged estates highlight that general social improvement, including social inclusion, will not occur "unless the physical framework is reasonably well maintained". The French NRS proposes as an example of good practice its national plan to eradicate substandard or inadequate housing (in French: "habitat indigne"). In Poland, the NRS refers to resources that will be made available for the refurbishment of existing dwellings.

People living in extreme overcrowding - The Finnish NRS refers to the need to monitor the situation of people "in cramped quarters". The Swedish NRS outlines that data is collected by Statistics Sweden on overcrowding. In the Polish NRS, reference is made to overcrowding as a problem especially for children in emergency care and educational centres (however, measures to tackle this problem are unclear). In the French NRS, the *Observatoire national des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale* (ONPES) refers in its 2006 annual report to the difficulties of poorer households to access decent housing which can lead to overcrowded and inadequate living conditions.

This ETHOS mapping exercise on the National Strategy Reports demonstrates that countries are increasingly aware of homelessness pathways and the need to tackle the problem at different levels. It is important to note, however, that the NRSs covers such a wide range of policies that they cannot possibly give a comprehensive report of all national and local homelessness initiatives in a given (for more information on homeless policies in Europe see www.feantsa.org).



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Health and homelessness in the NRSs

Integrating a health approach into policies on homelessness and housing exclusion

In 2006, issues of health and homelessness were at the heart of FEANTSA's work, as the annual theme for the year was "The Right to Health is a Human Right: Ensuring access to Health for People who are Homeless". The transnational exchanges and research undertaken, both by the research observatory and within the structures of FEANTSA's membership ([European Report 2006](#)), served to give a better understanding of the role of health and access to quality healthcare in relation to homelessness. The focus of the work was on the health situation of people in a situation of rooflessness or houselessness. The findings that emerged from that work included the following:

- Health has a role to play in understanding the pathways into homelessness and the barriers to moving on from homelessness
- Homeless people tend to suffer from very bad health and face significant barriers in trying to access the care that they need
- Mental health, dual diagnosis, addiction, dental health and certain chronic diseases are some of the problems that are more widespread among the homeless population.
- Health policies and health policy-makers have a role to play in an effective strategy to combat homelessness.

A health approach to homelessness in the streamlined National Reports

In relation to the health of people who are homeless, relevant policy developments are outlined in both the social inclusion strand and the health strand of the NRSs. In some cases health initiatives directly focusing on homeless people are outlined and in some cases, planned policies, to improve access for example, promise to benefit people who are homeless and having difficulty in accessing healthcare. The target of these health initiatives tends to be roofless and houseless people with severe health problems, but there is also some focus on prevention (of family or youth homelessness for example) through policies to support people with addiction or mental health problems for example.

Recognition of health as an important factor in relation to homelessness

Some of the NRSs recognise that health factors have an important role in relation to homelessness, though they not yet have managed to integrate a strong health perspective into their homelessness strategies. This is the case in the Polish NRS where health issues ("addictions, health problems, including disability, mental disease, HIV/AIDS" - p80) are identified as one of the four primary causes of homelessness. In the Slovenian NRS, homeless people are identified as a vulnerable group in light of their housing and health problems (p10).

Health as part of an integrated homelessness strategy:

Ireland: The Irish NRS outlines how health problems have been recognised as a significant burden for people experiencing homelessness and on the lowest socioeconomic groups in general (p4). The Irish government plans to involve the department of health and the Health Service Executive in integrated strategy to tackle homelessness. (p71) This is also part of the overall drive to reduce health inequalities.

Sweden: The Swedish NRS also highlights substance abuse problems and mental health problems as important factors in relation to homelessness, particularly family homelessness. In response to this, the Department of Health and Welfare is to draw up guidelines on how to prevent family homelessness, resulting from these issues. One avenue that will be further developed is the system of personal representatives who mediate for the person in their contact with the different authorities. (p27)



Promoting and facilitating access to health for people who are homeless

In many of the NSRs there are examples of policies or elements of policies that will serve to improve access to services for certain people who are homeless or which will break down some of the barriers that the healthcare system frequently poses for people in a situation of housing exclusion.

Belgium: at Federal level, the obstacles to using a reference address for people who are homeless will be done away with. This will simplify the administrative procedures in order to access entitlements for people who are homeless in the area of healthcare among others. An interesting project is also planned by the Communauté Française which will aim to inform and raise awareness about health among people who are homeless. (p17)

Czech Republic: There is a strong recognition in the Czech NRS that the health of people who are homeless receives inadequate attention, despite their often severe and chronic situation. To begin to address this situation, the Czech NRS outlines an approach to improve recuperative facilities and specialist care. (p31)

Germany: The German NRS outlines an approach to improving access to health for disadvantaged and often hard to reach groups by having services to promote health available in certain specific environments. (p38) The examples suggested are child care centres and old age centres, but there would also be significant scope to include centres for people who are homeless in this kind of initiative.

Latvia: the Latvian NRS mentions that certain vulnerable groups are exempted from a patient contribution to payment for healthcare services, including 'needy persons'. This is important, as even a small financial charge upfront can be a barrier to people who are homeless. Also significant is that care is free for tuberculosis patients. TB is a major problem for homeless people in many European countries and with a growing emergence of multi-drug resistant strains, it is vital that treatment be facilitated. (p37)

Netherlands: The Dutch NRS describes the work taking place in the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is working with other parties to develop a nationwide system for the electronic exchange of medical data via the electronic health record (In Dutch: elektronisch patiëntendossier (EPD)). This is an area of technology that could have a lot of interest for people who are homeless and which could facilitate their contact with the healthcare system. Some people who are homeless may not be able to maintain sustained and ongoing contact with the healthcare system. This can mean that their medical records are unavailable to those currently treating them, so that there is an incomplete understanding of their needs and medical history. It can also mean endlessly repeated assessments and homeless people often express their frustration with having to answer the same questions again and again. It would seem that electronic records have the potential to bypass these problems.

Conclusions:

- There is a recognition of pressing needs of homeless people in the area of health in many of NRSs and in Ireland and Sweden the health authorities have an active role in relation to homelessness.
- Some initiatives to facilitate administrative procedures and make services more accessible have the potential to improve access to care for people who are homeless.
- There is a wide range of experience and it would seem that there would be good scope for exchange and mutual learning. It would be useful to explore the value of integrating a strong health dimension into homelessness strategies.



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Integrating an employment approach into policies on homelessness and housing exclusion

In 2007, FEANTSA will dedicate its Annual Theme to **employment and homelessness**. FEANTSA members have gained a breadth of expertise in the area of employment for people who are homeless. The annual theme will help to pool this expertise and further develop effective and innovative approaches for improving the employability of people who are homeless.

Employment is an important element of social integration. It can play a key role in bringing people who are homeless on a pathway out of poverty and social exclusion. Employment helps to establish a social network, to gain experience, to improve skills, to develop self-esteem and to move towards financial independence. This has a positive effect on other areas of life as well, such as the mental well-being of the person.

However, people who are homeless very often belong to the people furthest from the labour market. They face [multiple barriers in accessing employment](#). These obstacles are personal such as mental ill health. In addition, there are many structural barriers such as lack of affordable housing. People who are homeless are also confronted with societal barriers such as stigmatisation and racism.

Although in particular **roofless and houseless people** face a multitude of barriers to work, many of the obstacles may apply to **people in insecure and inadequate housing** as well.

To develop the employability of people who are homeless and help them to connect with the labour market, quality services are needed that address these barriers in a holistic and flexible way.

Although employment on the mainstream labour market may be a realistic goal for some homeless people, this will not be the case for particularly vulnerable people such as people with a history of severe substance abuse. More subtle employment schemes such as supported employment or meaningful occupation therefore have to be an integral part of active inclusion policies if these are to be effective for people who are homeless.

Recognition of employment as an important factor in relation to homelessness

Some NRSs refer to unemployment, structural changes on the labour market and globalisation as some of the main causes for homelessness.

Czech Republic: Among the most frequent objective causes of homelessness are structural social changes (a transforming labour market). [...]The most frequent subjective causes include unemployment. (p.80)

Active inclusion policies for people who are homeless

All NRSs mention in one form or another employment programmes or initiatives for people furthest from the labour market, disadvantaged groups, people at risk of exclusion from the labour market or socially vulnerable groups.

Some countries propose activation schemes that specifically target people who are homeless.

Czech Republic: An independent grant scheme (GS) focuses directly on people who are homeless. One of the objectives is" to support the social inclusion of homeless people into society, to return them to, and maintain them in, the labour market." (p. 81)

Denmark: The Government set up a pool in 2005 to establish a *special mentor scheme* located at drop-in shelters. The idea is for people attached to the shelters to assist disadvantaged people in their occupational reintegration and support them with advice on how to behave at a workplace. (p.21)



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Spain: The Spanish NRS mentions the development of a programme in collaboration with NGOs for medium and long term stays in centres for people who are homeless. These centres will among other services offer employment integration measures.

Some countries do not specify the target groups of measures for the people furthest from the labour market. This leaves the possibility that they will also apply for people who are homeless.

In many countries the definition of the people furthest from the labour market as described in the NRSs appears to be rather narrow. There is the risk that people who are multiply disadvantaged will not be adequately considered if plans become fixed.

Although people experiencing homelessness might benefit from schemes targeting people with disabilities or third-country-nationals, the effectiveness for people who are homeless might be limited. The barriers to work that are specific to the experience of homelessness are not taken into adequate account. For instance, living in a shelter will make it difficult to follow and properly prepare a vocational training course due to the noisy and stressful living surroundings.

However, in a number of countries there are existing initiatives in relation to employment for people experiencing homelessness that are not mentioned in the NRSs.

For instance, in the **UK**, ESF funding as well as funding through EQUAL is being used to finance employment initiatives specifically targeting people experiencing homelessness: . [Tackling Multiple Disadvantages in London by Improving Employability – TMD London.](#)

In addition, there are EQUAL projects targeting people who are homeless with similar aims in the following countries: **Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden** (more information [here](#)).

Conclusions:

- Although there is an emerging recognition of the importance of employment for the social re-integration of people who are homeless, employment is only rarely an integral part of homelessness policies.
- All Member States have developed active inclusion policies for people on the margins of the labour market but there is still a lot of scope for further development in order to make them responsive to the needs of people who are homeless. More attention needs to be paid to people facing a multitude of barriers to work, including barriers that are specific to the experience of homelessness and housing exclusion.
- There is evidence that EQUAL and ESF funding has proved to be very useful in developing innovative approaches and promoting transnational exchanges in the area of employment and homelessness.



III. Conclusion

Homelessness is a priority in the EU social inclusion process

FEANTSA has followed the EU social inclusion strategy since the beginning (2001-2006) and has seen **the emergence of tackling homelessness and improving access to decent housing as key priorities** for anti-poverty policy at EU level. The recently submitted National Reports of the 27 EU countries confirm this trend and demonstrate the following:

- Homelessness and access to decent housing are still key priorities for the EU member states in line with the 7 key priorities highlighted in the 2005 and 2006 Joint Reports on social inclusion;
- The need for **urgent action** in providing access to decent and affordable housing, and the need to prevent different forms of homelessness and housing exclusion from increasing in Europe namely rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing (see [ETHOS](#));
- The **huge potential** for learning on policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion given that many EU countries are in the process of developing or revising policies in this area;
- **Housing has emerged as an important pillar** of the EU social inclusion and social protection strategy. National reports on social inclusion demonstrate that housing should indeed be an essential element of social welfare in any country;
- The social inclusion strategy has greatly contributed to **raising awareness on different forms of poverty and exclusion** including homelessness, housing exclusion, labour market exclusion, child poverty, poverty experienced by immigrants and ethnic minorities, family poverty, gender inequality, discrimination and others. Now that these different societal problems have been identified as key aspects of social inclusion policy, there is a need for **urgent action** to tackle these different problems under PROGRESS;
- After a first phase of awareness-raising between 2001 and 2006, **poverty and exclusion are now better understood**. There is a huge body of literature which has emerged as a result of the initiatives funded under the EU Social Exclusion Programme 2002-2006 (European networks, peer reviews, seminars, research on specific themes, etc) which can serve as a basis for taking action in the second phase of implementation of policies to tackle different forms of poverty and exclusion under PROGRESS.

In order to preserve the value of the EU social inclusion pillar of the new streamlined strategy and prevent loss of interest in the process, FEANTSA would suggest the following action:

- In order to take the EU Social Inclusion process forward under PROGRESS, it is important to **create clear mutual learning processes** around the societal problems covered under the strategy (see above) if the EU is to have a genuine impact on alleviating poverty. The EU offers a number of governance tools which enable actors in the social sector (ministries, local authorities, service providers, people experiencing poverty) to benefit from transnational exchanges. It is now time to use the full potential of these specific tools by coming together around the specific themes outlined as priorities in EU anti-poverty policy;
- Involvement of national, regional and local actors in this European process has improved over the last 5 years, with new governance tools emerging and promoting participation such as peer reviews, transnational exchange projects, NAP consultations and others. In order to maintain and reinforce this involvement and interest in EU social inclusion initiatives, **it is crucial to make these relevant for the everyday work of local players**. A clear focus on the different societal problems under the umbrella term of "social inclusion" will allow for more concrete objectives and exchanges in the European fight against poverty;
- Given that homeless policy is often developed through cooperation between different ministries (social affairs, housing, health, justice and home affairs, employment), it is crucial to involve all relevant ministries in the EU social inclusion process in order to optimise the value of the OMC in the area of homelessness policy-making;
- **FEANTSA proposes to facilitate transnational exchanges** between different actors on one of the societal problems dealt with under the Social Inclusion process - homelessness and housing exclusion - by using its expertise and contacts to foster cooperation between different levels of government (from local to international) and different partners involved in the fight against homelessness. FEANTSA calls on other thematic networks to follow suit.



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Annex : European Typology on Homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS)

Conceptual Category		Operational Category		Generic Definition	National Sub-Categories
ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Rough Sleeping (no access to 24-hour accommodation) / No abode	
	2	People staying in a night shelter	2.1	Overnight shelter	
HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 3.2	Homeless hostel Temporary Accommodation	
	4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation / reception centres (asylum)	
			5.2	Migrant workers accommodation	
	6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions	
			6.2	Medical institutions	
	7	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for homeless people	
7.2			Supported accommodation		
7.3			Transitional accommodation with support		
7.4			Accommodation with support		
INSECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1	Temporarily with family/friends	
			8.2	No legal (sub)tenancy	
			8.3	Illegal occupation of building	
			8.4	Illegal occupation of land	
	9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1	Legal orders enforced (rented)	
			9.2	Re-possession orders (owned)	
10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents of domestic violence		
INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-standard structures	11.1	Mobile home / caravan	
			11.2	Non-standard building	
			11.3	Temporary structure	
12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Unfit for habitation (under national legislation; occupied)		
13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding		

For more detailed information on ETHOS, please consult the 2005 Review of Homeless statistics in Europe ([here](#)), and the ETHOS webpages on the FEANTSA website ([here](#)).