

## What future for EU Social Inclusion policy? *FEANTSA Recommendations*

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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 incoming National Strategy Reports of the 25 EU countries confirm this trend and demonstrate the following:

- 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 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 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.
- **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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