



FEANTSA Flash, May 2009

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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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- ▶ **Candidate MEPs sign up to FEANTSA pledge to end homelessness** [03/06/2009]

Ahead of the European Parliament elections taking place 4-7 June, FEANTSA and its members are urging candidate MEPs to sign up to the following commitment:

"As candidate to the only elected body of the EU, I commit to using all the tools available to me to make progress towards ending homelessness."

19 candidate MEPs from across Europe have signed up so far - check progress on our [commitment page](#).

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- ▶ **ENHW Newsletter spring edition now online!** [03/06/2009]

The spring edition of the European Network of Homeless Health Workers (ENHW) newsletter is now available [online!](#)

The ENHW brings together health professionals working with people who are homeless across the EU. It is a multi-disciplinary initiative, aimed at all persons working with homeless people in a health capacity, across all areas of mental and physical health.

The ENHW is a free initiative. To subscribe, or send articles or information on health and homelessness issues for inclusion in future issues, please write to Stefania Del Zotto ([Stefania.delzotto@feantsa.org](mailto:Stefania.delzotto@feantsa.org)).

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- ▶ **FEANTSA's Annual Research Conference: Registration now open!** [03/06/2009]

Registration is now open to FEANTSA's fourth Annual Research Conference, which will focus on 'Homelessness and Poverty'. Taking place on the 18th of September in Paris, the conference is being organised in collaboration with the European Network of Housing Research, Working Group on Welfare Policy.

A draft programme and a registration form are now available on [FEANTSA's website](#).

For any questions, please email Christine Lambert, [Christine.lambert@feantsa.org](mailto:Christine.lambert@feantsa.org).

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- ▶ **FEANTSA's European Conference - Save the Date!** [03/06/2009]

FEANTSA's European Conference will this year be taking place on the 23rd of October, in Copenhagen. Entitled 'Sharing the Power - Working Together', the conference will be the highlight of FEANTSA's Annual Theme 2009 on Participation and Homelessness. Co-organised by Danish FEANTSA member, projekt UDENFOR, the conference aims to show the importance of involving service users at all levels in homeless services.

Parallel to the workshops, videos of participation initiatives, documentaries and short films on homelessness and participation from across Europe will be shown. If you have any videos or documentaries from your country that you would like to share at the conference (in English or French or with English/French subtitles), then please contact Silke Paasche, [silke.paasche@feantsa.org](mailto:silke.paasche@feantsa.org).

See FEANTSA's homepage for more details.

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► **FEANTSA's European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 3 - Call for Papers** [03/06/2009]

Article contributions for the next volume of the European Journal of Homelessness, on the theme of Governance and Homelessness, are still being accepted!

Articles should be submitted by the 8th of June to the lead editor of the journal, Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, [tosullvn@tcd.ie](mailto:tosullvn@tcd.ie). Articles will be peer reviewed by external referees.

See here for more [details for submission](#).

If you would like to order a copy of Volumes 1 or 2 of the European Journal of Homelessness, please write to Charlotta Odling, [charlotta.odling@feantsa.org](mailto:charlotta.odling@feantsa.org)

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► **UN/ECE Workshop on Homelessness - presentations now available** [03/06/2009]

The presentations given at the UN/ECE Workshop on Homelessness which took place on the 18-19 May in Oslo are now available online. FEANTSA Director, Freek Spinnewijn was one of the speakers at the event, along with speakers from Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Norway.

The workshop dealt with three themes: the extent and manifestations of homelessness in the ECE region; how homelessness is connected to social housing policies; and the policy means and strategies to prevent and fight homelessness.

To download the presentations and to follow the video link of the event, please see [Husbanken's](#) website.

## News from the European Union

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► **8th meeting held of People Experiencing Poverty** [03/06/2009]

The 8th meeting of People Experiencing Poverty took place in Brussels on the 15-16 May. Organised jointly by the Czech Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission and EAPN (the European Anti-Poverty Network), the meeting was an occasion for 150 people experiencing poverty in Europe to express their views and dialogue with policy and decision-makers in the field of the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the European level.

The meeting was entitled 'Where we live - What we need' and addressed the topics of housing, financial inclusion and access to basic services. A meeting report will shortly be available from the EAPN website at [www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu)

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► **Fundamental Rights Agency study on discrimination** [03/06/2009]

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has published a study showing that 55 percent of ethnic minorities and immigrants in the European Union believe discrimination to be widespread where they live. The survey questioned 23,500 immigrants and people from ethnic minorities across the EU to examine their experiences of racism or discrimination.

Of the people questioned, 37 percent said they faced discrimination in the past year. 80 of these did not report the problem to police. Roma and African people reported the highest levels of abuse. Forty seven percent of Roma reported high levels of discrimination in the past 12 months. Forty one percent of ethnic sub-Saharan Africans reported high levels of discrimination, as did 36 percent of those from northern Africa.

The study confirms the findings of previous reports by EU agencies and bodies that show governments need to do more to protect the rights of ethnic minorities; providing better access to social housing, jobs, education and healthcare.

Agency Director Morten Kjaerum, said the results show discrimination, harassment and racially motivated incidents are more widespread than thought by national authorities. The survey found many of those discriminated against have a 'lack of confidence' in government anti-racism policies that are meant to protect them. Up to 94 percent of respondents asked did not know where to seek support or advice after incidents.

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▶ **UNECE/Eurostat joint meeting - Enumeration of homeless people in the 2011 census** [03/06/2009]

The UNECE and Eurostat are co-organising a preparatory meeting on the 2010 round of censuses, to take place 28-30 October 2009 in Geneva. One of the themes of this meeting will be the enumeration of homeless people in the census. In this session, countries will be expected to exchange their experiences with regards to compliance with the CES Recommendations in the planning and conduction of the censuses of the 2010 round. Contributions on this subject are expected by countries, international organisations and possibly also by non-statistical agencies working with the homeless. Participation in the meeting is restricted to official national delegations and experts invited by the UN Secretariat.

See more in the [Introductory note](#) and on the [UNECE webpage](#)

## News from our Members

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▶ **FNARS launches new website** [03/06/2009]

FNARS have launched their new website. Including a video-based 'Focus' section and a members' only extranet, the new site offers a wealth of information and is a very user-friendly tool.

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▶ **Focus Ireland organises seminar to increase awareness of FEANTSA's role in tackling homelessness across Europe** [03/06/2009]

On the 13th of May, Mr. Michael Finneran T.D. Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal officially opened a seminar held at the Institute of European Affairs in Dublin to raise awareness of the role FEANTSA and its members play in tackling homelessness across the European Union.

The Irish members of FEANTSA (Focus Ireland, Irish Council for Social Housing, the Simon Community and the DePaul Ireland) and the European Observatory on Homelessness organised the targeted seminar to invite organisations concerned with housing and homelessness in Ireland to share this work more widely in the sector.

FEANTSA welcomed that the Irish Government has made its own commitment to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2010.

Speaking at the Seminar Minister Finneran said: 'I believe it is important that the issue of addressing homelessness is kept on the European agenda -turning to homelessness matters in Ireland I wish to say that the Government is committed to combating homelessness and progress continues to be made both in the development and implementation of homelessness policy. As Minister for Housing I have given particular attention to this work over the past year and I am glad to announce that the National Implementation Plan for the Homeless Strategy has been published recently on my Department's internet site'.

He concluded: 'My own department has devoted a long of energy to development of the Homelessness Strategy and implementation plan. I believe this work provides a robust framework to guide the action required at national level to promote and support effective implementation locally'.

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▶ **Off the Streets and Into Work's Ethical Enterprise and Employment (3xE) website is now live!** [03/06/2009]

Off the Streets and into Work!  
 ½s Ethical Enterprise Employment Network (3xE) brings together organisations using social enterprise and supported employment models, and organisations working with unemployed people who are homeless or at risk. The Network's website is now live! See [www.3xE.org.uk](http://www.3xE.org.uk) for information about services to social enterprises in the homelessness sector, members' directory, news, events and more.

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▶ **St Mungo's celebrate 40th anniversary** [03/06/2009]

St Mungo's will celebrate their 40th anniversary with an Action Week beginning on 5th June 2009. Events include a five mile sponsored walk across London's bridges on Sunday 5 July, which will be followed by a summer fete. St Mungo's will also publish research about mental health and homelessness as part of their anniversary year.

## Homelessness in the Headlines

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▶ **Belgium: Heavy penalties for landlords who are guilty of illegal evictions** [03/06/2009]

According to figures recently released by the CAW (centre for social care and support,) there are currently 10.300 homeless people in Flanders. Increasingly, more young people and women are being affected. It is estimated that one third of those experiencing homelessness are confronted with family violence, and two-thirds suffer from difficult family situations.

Furthermore, evictions are on the rise, both in the private rental sector and in the social housing sector. The VVSG (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities) estimates that the number of court cases of landlords trying to evict tenants is at least 100 a week. The number of actual evictions still remains lower than the number of threatened evictions. There were 430 in Antwerp in the year 2005, and some 250 in Ghent. The VVSG claims that the evictions are not always legal, and do not follow proper procedures, with some tenants being put out on the street from one day to the next.

Justice Minister Stefaan De Clerck (CD & V) is preparing a law to introduce a heavy fine for landlords who illegally evict their tenants & ½ they would also be obliged to pay financial compensation to tenants.

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▶ **Denmark: Danish journalist accuses Danish government of starving homeless migrants out of the country** [03/06/2009]

Jan Birkemose, journalist at the Danish paper Ugebrevet A4, recently accused the Danish government of turning its back on the 30.000 Eastern European workers who contributed to the Danish economy during the boom years.

With the arrival of the economic crisis, and rising unemployment, he states that Danish society has become increasingly hostile to migrants. Specifically, shelters for the homeless risk losing their subsidies if they give as much as a bowl of soup to homeless Eastern Europeans. For the 600 Eastern Europeans who are currently homeless in Denmark, there is no recourse to food or a bed at any homeless shelters. Birkemose accuses the government of leading a 'starvation strategy' to pressurise them into leaving the country as soon as possible.

He claims that 'the vast majority of homeless Eastern Europeans scrape through life by begging and petty crime, and two winters ago the Danish lack of humanity led to the freezing to death of two Polish people'.

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▶ **France : 16 organisations denounce measures to prevent aid for undocumented migrants** [03/06/2009]

The controversial concept of "délit de solidarité" (solidarity crime) has sparked a heated debate between France's immigration minister Eric Besson and associations working with immigrants and vulnerable populations.

Article L622-1 of the French code of entry and residence of foreigners and asylum seekers (the Ceseda) states that 'any person who has either through direct or indirect help, facilitated or attempted to facilitate the entry, circulation or stay of an undocumented foreigner in France' can face up to 5 years imprisonment, and a fine of 30.000 euro.

Several French organisations, including FEANTSA members Emmaus and FNARS, have reacted strongly, stating that this article makes no distinction between 'traffickers who exploit the vulnerability of migrants, and citizens who are acting in the name of humanity, and in the defence of fundamental human rights'. They add that this 'intimidation is very damaging...and is aimed at ending all aid for undocumented migrants'.

A group of 16 organisations in France have reaffirmed their defence of unconditional access to shelter, and are demanding that article L622-1 be modified. A petition has been launched to suppress the 'solidarity crime' in the legislation - for more information see [www.delinquants-solidaires.org](http://www.delinquants-solidaires.org).

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▶ **France : Emergency accomodation short of funding** [03/06/2009]

Regional homelessness organisations in France warn that they are facing shortages in funding. Demand for services is rising without accompanying increases in funding. Ida Pontarollo (Director of a shelter at Saint-Claude-Champagnole in the Franche-Compte region) has reported rising demand and longer waiting lists, related to rising unemployment. The regional health and social authorities (Drass and Ddas) have been asked to present strategies for cutting costs in the prevention of social exclusion in 2009, 2010 and 2011. FNARS Franche-Compté, which brings together 22 organisations in the region say that they are frustrated by these new measures, which undermine their work. FNARS Franche-Compté's membership provides accomodation for 3.300 people, a figure likely to increase by 20% in 2009. Yet, during 2008, they saw funding fall by 10%. New cuts mean a further reduction of 8% in 2009. Organisations are calling for 1 million Euros of additional funding, which they say is needed to offer quality services that facilitate dignity and independence.

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▶ **Ireland: Hundreds of Homes to Be Leased for Use by People Experiencing Homelessness** [03/06/2009]

The Irish government plans to lease out approximately 300 homes for long-term use by homeless people. The scheme is part of a drive to reduce the number of people living in emergency shelters and Bed and Breakfast accommodation. There are currently around 3.000 people living in emergency accommodation in Ireland.

The government hopes to expand the use of private accommodation for homeless people. The Irish four-year homeless strategy aims to ensure that people are not forced to stay in emergency accommodation for more than six months. Under the new scheme, leases will be taken out for a minimum of four years and various forms of support will be available for up to three years.

The scheme will be funded through savings on emergency accommodation. Accommodation and support contracts will be tendered. Homeless organisations have welcomed the development but are concerned that emergency accommodation funding may be cut too quickly. Some homelessness organisations say emergency shelters are already unable to meet demand - Simon Communities, Cork report that they have had to turn away hundreds of people in recent months. Despite cutbacks, total spending on homelessness in Ireland will increase by 5 percent this year.

► **Spain: government to unveil immigration reform law** [03/06/2009]

The Spanish government will soon unveil its controversial immigration reform law. Key points of the law deal with family regroupings, arrests and detainment of undocumented individuals, and the criminalization of those who provide aid to undocumented migrants. The General Council of the Judicial (CGPJ) and NGOs petitioned the government earlier this year to make changes to the first draft, and now the revised bill is ready for Cabinet approval.

Victims of violence who are illegal will be allowed to stay in the country from the first day they file a complaint and could be given work permits. According to government statistics, 44 percent of women who were killed at the hands of their partners last year were foreign-born.

One point in the old law which sparked heated debate was the penalization of those aiding and harbouring undocumented migrants. As in France, the government proposed fines for anyone who helped undocumented workers remain in the country. Critics said that the text unfairly criminalized those who were offering humanitarian help and shelter to migrants in genuine need. The government, which claims its aim is to fight exploitation, has changed the wording to make it a crime for anyone to invite foreigners to stay in Spain illegally.

► **The Netherlands: Social housing companies to provide mobile homes for travelling community** [03/06/2009]

Social housing companies in the Netherlands are building mobile homes and managing the land that they can park on, in a new scheme to provide suitable housing for travelling communities, Roma and Sinti. This group, as well as homeless people, the elderly and children, is a priority group for the social housing companies.

Leiden and Enschede now have 29 mobile homes, which are being offered to travellers who are in accommodation that is currently a fire hazard, or too small.

The initiative is supported by the Ministry of Housing (VROM) and a feasibility study will be made to organize a mobile housing network nationally.

► **UK: Government announces GBP 70m fund to support communities with migration** [03/06/2009]

Earlier this spring, the UK government announced new plans for a Migrants Impact Fund of 70million GBP. Economic migrants and students coming to the UK from outside the EU will be charged a levy in addition to their normal visa application fee, the revenue from which will form the fund. The fund means that migrants will be asked to pay an additional contribution to that which they already make through taxes to support the communities in which they live. The funding will be targeted at projects which have identified innovative solutions to migration-related pressures across England and Wales. Projects considered for funding must be able to demonstrate that they bring benefits to the settled, as well as the migrant community in an area. Projects could include English language teaching, taking action against rogue landlords, extra teachers in school with high migrant populations, measures to increase registration with doctors, or targeted support for policing.

Alongside the new fund, the government has published 'Managing the Impacts of Migration: Improvements and Innovations'. This is an update on the actions being taken in relation to migration. Actions include the promotion of integration, support for local authorities, the protection of workers and steps to improve population data collection. There are also plans to consult on a new Migration Impacts Committee to provide advice on the local impacts of migration. One measure detailed in the report is the provision of funding to FEANTSA members Homeless Link to co-ordinate action to reduce rough sleeping amongst recent EU migrants.

Download the [full report](#) here.

## Announcements

► **Call for Project Proposals in Paris** [03/06/2009]

The French Government, The City of Paris and the Regional Council have announced a call for projects using innovative approaches to accommodate 250 targeted service users. The targeted groups are socially excluded youth, people with addiction problems and people with mental health problems. The deadline for submitting projects is the 15 July 2009. Please see here for [full details](#).

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▶ **Send us your campaign posters !** [03/06/2009]

The European Commission is currently organising a European Media Conference which will take place later this year, on the topic of poverty. At this event the Commission would like to display posters of campaigns that have been run across Europe on the theme of combating poverty and social exclusion. Any posters used for raising awareness on homelessness would be welcome.

If you would like your campaign poster to be displayed at the Conference, then please send a pdf or jpg of the poster, whether recent or not, in colour or black and white, to Charlotta Odling ([charlotta.odling@feantsa.org](mailto:charlotta.odling@feantsa.org)).

An electronic version is preferred (pdf or jpg) as the European Commission will take care of the printing.

## Publications

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▶ **Homeless Link Study 'Emergency Accommodation: A survey of provision in areas with no direct access hostel'** [03/06/2009]

A new survey by Homeless Link has revealed that with the credit crunch creating a new wave of homeless people, more than one in four local authorities (28%) in England do not provide any emergency accommodation to those most likely to end up sleeping on the streets. Download the [report](#) here.

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▶ **INSEE report: 'Social Exclusion in Relation to Housing: Statistical Methods and Sources'** [03/06/2009]

INSEE's Social Exclusion in Relation to Housing Group have published a report on data collection methods and statistic sources. Download the full [report](#) here.

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▶ **Irish National Advisory Committee on Drugs Publish Study 'Drug Use, Sex Work and the Risk Environment in Dublin'** [03/06/2009]

A survey has questioned 35 drug-using sex workers - 31 women and 4 men - aged between 21 and 49 in Dublin. The results showed that 'Drug using sex workers are vulnerable people with complex and multiple needs that span health, social and legal issues' said Dr Teresa Whitaker, a researcher for the advisory committee. Download the [results](#) of the study here.

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▶ **Julien Damon Report on Homelessness Policies in the EU** [03/06/2009]

Julien Damon (Associate Professor of Political Science, University Paris IV Sorbonne) has presented a report on homelessness policies in the European Union to the French Housing Minister, Christine Boutin. The report addresses the problem of homelessness from both a local and European perspective. The report notes that France is amongst the biggest spenders on tackling homelessness and amongst the first countries to recognise its structural causes. However, the report also recognises that France's approach could be rationalised to be more efficient. Download the full [report](#) here.

## News from the Council of Europe

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▶ **Hammarberg urges governments to sign up to collective complaints mechanism** [03/06/2009]

In a recent article, Mr Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, urged governments to ratify the protocol on collective complaints against violations of social rights.

He argued "The protection of social rights will be further tested during the current economic crisis. Like other human rights they are enshrined in treaties agreed by governments, one of them being the European Social Charter. The challenge is to ensure that these agreements are enforced in reality. This requires that people are informed about them and have an opportunity to complain when they find their rights violated. In this way, active civil society groups can provide a valuable contribution".

When listing some of the successes of the collective complaints procedure, he refers to FEANTSA's Collective Complaint against France; "In response to a complaint concerning housing rights, France undertook to take into account the decision of the European Committee of Social Rights when implementing the Act on the enforceable right to housing". Slovakia and Hungary have recently ratified the European Social Charter, which is a welcome step, but neither countries have yet ratified the collective complaint procedure, nor Article 31 which is on the right to housing. See here for the [article](#) in full.



**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)

**FEANTSA is supported financially by the European Commission. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.**