



FEANTSA Flash, April 2009

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

## FEANTSA News

- ▶ **FEANTSA celebrates its 20th Anniversary!** [04/05/2009]  
2009 marks the 20th anniversary of FEANTSA's work! Since its beginnings in 1989, FEANTSA has come a long way in terms of membership growth, research outcomes and political influence. FEANTSA is indebted to the many dedicated, skilled people who have been involved in helping the organisation grow from strength to strength over the years. A number of events will be planned in 2009 to celebrate this special occasion – please check the homepage of the FEANTSA website in the coming months for more information.

- ▶ **FEANTSA contributes to health inequalities consultation and issues a Homelessness and Alcohol Toolkit** [04/05/2009]

FEANTSA recently sent a contribution to the consultation on EU action to reduce health inequalities. The European Commission is expected to publish a communication on this topic in the autumn.

Download [FEANTSA contribution](#) here.

As part of its commitment in the framework of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, FEANTSA has issued a briefing note on homelessness and alcohol aiming at raising awareness on the issue. The toolkit will shortly be available in French too.

Read FEANTSA's [briefing paper](#) on homelessness and alcohol

See [resource page](#) on Homelessness and alcohol addiction

See [European Alcohol and Health Forum](#) web page.

- ▶ **FEANTSA Funding directory updated** [04/05/2009]

FEANTSA's Funding Directory, available from the Members Only section of FEANTSA's website has recently been updated with current calls for proposals and summaries of EU funding programmes.

If you are not sure of your member password, please contact Ruth Owen ([ruth.owen@feantsa.org](mailto:ruth.owen@feantsa.org))

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► **FEANTSA responds to consultation on financial inclusion and ensuring access to a basic bank account** [04/05/2009]

The FEANTSA expert group on employment recently prepared a response to the European Commission's 'Consultation on Financial Inclusion: Ensuring Access to a basic Bank Account'

Download the [FEANTSA response](#) here.

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► **FEANTSA seminar: The impact of the economic crisis on tackling homelessness at local level, 28 May 2009, Brussels – places still available!** [04/05/2009]

On Thursday, 28 May 2009, FEANTSA and the European Committee of the Regions will host a European seminar looking at the impact of the economic crisis on the profiles of homelessness, on budgets and on strategies.

The [programme](#) includes speakers from the European Commission, the municipalities of Cologne, Utrecht and Gdynia, as well as speakers from organisations such as Crisis UK and Caritas Spain and local government representatives from Ireland and France.

Translation will be provided in English, French and Spanish. The programme (available in English, French, Hungarian and Spanish) and other practical information is available on the FEANTSA website. To register, please contact Ruth Owen ([ruth.owen@feantsa.org](mailto:ruth.owen@feantsa.org))

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► **Habitact – European local authorities forum to combat homelessness** [04/05/2009]

After three years of thematic seminars on local homelessness strategies, FEANTSA aims to develop more structured European exchanges between local authorities through the Habitact forum. This forum is especially aimed at local civil servants (in housing, social or health departments) who want to get useful practical information for their daily work. The first Habitact meeting will take place on Wednesday 27 May (the day before the 2009 European thematic seminar). Local authority representatives will meet from 16h-18h to discuss the Habitact project. For more information about Habitact, see [webpage](#) on the local authorities forum.

Please contact Liz Gosme ([liz.gosme@feantsa.org](mailto:liz.gosme@feantsa.org)) if you wish to register to join Habitact and attend the 27 May meeting.

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► **Homeless in Europe – Homelessness and the Arts: Creativity, empowerment and social change** [04/05/2009]

The spring 2009 edition of Homeless in Europe is now available online! This edition seeks to explore the ways in which the arts, including opera, film acting, painting and fashion design, have all been used in different parts of Europe to help homeless people deal with their problems and everyday life. In recent years, the use of art as a means to empowerment and well-being has taken on a larger role within the sphere of social service provision. It is becoming increasingly accepted that the cultural activities broadly known as 'the arts' can inspire vulnerable people to find a voice and empower those who are socially excluded.

See here for the latest edition of [Homeless in Europe!](#)

If you would like a paper copy of the magazine, please send your request (stating how many copies you would like and in which language – English or French) to Charlotta Odland ([charlotta.odland@feantsa.org](mailto:charlotta.odland@feantsa.org))

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► **New on FEANTSA's website!** [04/05/2009]

A new section on strategies to combat homelessness has been added to the FEANTSA website. Containing information on regional and national strategies to reduce and end homelessness, this new section is a useful resource for finding information on original and inspiring measures taking place across Europe. There are currently 11 strategies available, with more to soon to come. See [the strategies to combat homelessness page](#) for more details.

The [FEANTSA research pages](#) are now also available in French.

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## News from the European Union

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► **EP urges Member States to guarantee free movement of its citizens** [04/05/2009]

The civil liberties committee of the European Parliament has urged Member States to improve the transposition of the free movement directive. No Member State has transposed the Directive effectively and correctly in its entirety. Only seven Member States have problems of compliance limited to only a few provisions. The other 20 Member States have failed to transpose considerable and crucial provisions of the directive. For example, Member States frequently prevent spouses and children from joining their husband or father working elsewhere in the EU. Between June 2006 and February 2007, the Commission had to open 19 infringement proceedings against Member States for non-communication of national implementing measures and received more than 1.800 individual complaints, 40 questions from Parliament and 33 petitions on the application of the Directive.

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► **MEP's call on Spain to stop planning abuse** [04/05/2009]

The European Parliament's Petitions Committee recently approved the recommendations of a report which is highly critical of real estate development in Spain.

The report comes after a fact-finding mission was organised to Madrid, Valencia and Almeria earlier this year. It concludes that generalised real estate abuse exists in Spain and found that in Almeria, a tacit agreement between the Town Hall and builders allowed the construction of several thousand illegal homes in Albox. Most of these homes were bought by UK nationals, and some 2.000 houses now face possible demolition, leaving many homeless. The residents of the houses that have now been identified as illegal did not receive proper advice from the local authority, surveyors or local lawyers.

The report calls for the European Commission to investigate whether the rights and basic principles set out in the Treaty on European Union have been infringed upon. British Conservative Members of the European Parliament (MEP's) have launched a campaign to obtain restitution for the victims of demolished properties.

## News from our Members

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► **Germany: New homelessness action programme launched in North Rhine Westphalia** [04/05/2009]

A new action programme on homelessness has been launched by the government of the German Land North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). The programme 'Obdachlosigkeit verhindern - Weiterentwicklung der Hilfen in Wohnungsnotfällen' (Preventing homelessness – Developing support for housing emergencies) will receive 1.12 million euros. It aims to build on a previous homelessness programme in the region for which funding was stopped at the end of 2008. The new programme will focus particular attention on homeless women, young people under 25, older people and migrants. Says NRW Minister for Families, Armin Laschet: 'With this new programme we want to move away from supporting single projects. Instead we would like to help municipalities to create networks and mainstream good practices and approaches throughout the region'.

German FEANTSA member BAGW had protested against the ending of the previous programme in the region and welcomed the decision to continue the work with this new programme. North Rhine-Westphalia is the only region in Germany that has a developed homelessness strategy.

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► **The Netherlands : Federatie Opvang Report Success of G4 Homelessness Strategy** [04/05/2009]

FEANTSA members, Federatie Opvang report that the G4 measures to combat homelessness, initially brought in by finance minister Gerrit Zalm have had a profound impact. They report a decline in demand for night shelter places for the first time in 100 years. One shelter in Rotterdam has closed due to apparent lack of demand. The four largest cities in The Netherlands have few rough sleepers and have seen a decrease in the presence of homeless people during the day. Rotterdam has seen a dramatic fall – figures show 15 rough sleepers currently counted in the area, compared to 346 in 2006. The decrease in rough sleeping has reportedly been accompanied by a decrease in evictions resulting in homelessness and a reduction in criminal behaviour associated with homelessness. Of the 12.000 who were homeless in the Netherlands' four biggest cities in 2006, 6.437 are now on 're-socialisation pathways'.

The National Federation of Homeless People contests these reports. They cite an increase in service demand and link apparent reductions in demand to prohibitively strict conditions in hostels. They claim that the perceived reduction in homelessness reflects the fact that people experiencing homelessness are often hidden, partly in order to avoid restrictive conditions in hostel accommodation.

## Homelessness in the Headlines

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► **Belgium: First Belgian homeless football cup** [04/05/2009]

An 8-part TV programme will run from 6 April to 25 May 2009 in Belgium on how a Belgian football team was formed to participate in the Melbourne 2008 Homeless World Cup (TV één every Monday night from 20:35 to 21:20). The programme is accompanied by a book of interviews with team members and the star coach, Gilles De Bilde. This year, the first Belgian Homeless Cup will take place to determine the team for the Homeless World Cup in Milan 2009. Selection and training are in progress and the number of homeless soccer enthusiasts is still growing. The first tournament will take place in Antwerp on Thursday 23rd April and 10 teams will take part. The Minister of Culture and Sports, Bert Anciaux will kick off the game. The second tournament is planned to take place in Kortrijk in May and the final in Brussels at the end of June. A jury will rank the teams according to efforts on the reintegration of the players, as well as match results. The most important criteria for selection are motivation, team spirit and fair play. Players come from diverse backgrounds; some live in shelters, some are squatters, others are rough sleepers. For more information or to buy the book see [www.belgianhomelesscup.be/](http://www.belgianhomelesscup.be/)

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► **Denmark: Randers County puts funding into homelessness plan** [04/05/2009]

According to a new homeless plan decided on at the end of March, more funding will be put at the disposal of Randers County to deal with homelessness. Randers municipality will provide 11 million DKK, while a further 20 million DKK will be provided by the Welfare Department, to put in place a homelessness strategy. Randers municipality was targeted because, according to a study conducted in 2007, it has particular problems with homelessness.

Said the Chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs, Karen Brix Roed 'the homeless are a group that otherwise has had difficulty in joining the budget...but with money from the Welfare Ministry pools we have the opportunity to carry out the planned investments, and it is gratifying.'

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► **France: Housing Minister opens 'Hamlet of Hope' shelter supported by Disney** [04/05/2009]

Housing minister Christine Boutin has opened the first of a series of shelters called 'Hamlets of Hope' in Serris. Four other 'hamlets' are being created. At the opening ceremony, the minister welcomed this 'simple concept', which will give 'people in serious difficulty a breathing space where they can be accompanied to re-integrate into society'.

Disney is supporting the project and has provided the land for the first shelter. CEO, Philippe Gas, has announced the corporation's willingness to assist residents of the shelter into professional training projects at Disney. One such project is Bridges to Employment, which has created 10 direct jobs and 80 training courses for people without professional qualifications.

As reported in the last Flash, the minister's new measures have been challenged by housing and homelessness organizations who have called for a moratorium on evictions. Boutin took the opportunity of the opening to re-state her promise that no evictions would take place without an alternative accommodation solution and to call for organizations to get involved in new schemes where they can take on the rent of families in difficulty.

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► **Ireland: The Homeless Agency Partnership Implementation Plan 2009** [04/05/2009]

The Board of the Homeless Agency Partnership is in the process of developing an implementation plan in consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of 'Counted In, 2008, Evaluation of Homeless Services 2008 Series' and the 'Review of Finance and Expenditure for Homeless Services in Dublin'.

As part of the development of the implementation plan, the Implementation Steering Group (ISG) embarked on a series of consultation sessions with key stakeholders, including mainstream and specialist homeless service providers. Stakeholders were invited to input into the development of the plan and explore the potential impact of reconfiguration of homeless services on organisations and services delivery. The sessions were aimed at senior management, operational management and practitioner levels. The Homeless Agency Partnership's Five Priority Areas for 2009 are as follows:

1. Affordable and accessible housing with supports as required
  2. Funding of homeless services
  3. Re-configuration of homeless services
  4. Establishment of a pathways model of homeless and housing support services
  5. Implementation and change management
- See here for [further information](#) on the development of the Implementation Plan.

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► **Poland: 21 killed in fire at shelter** [04/05/2009]

21 people died in a fire at a shelter for people awaiting social housing on April 13 in Kamien Pomorski, northwestern Poland.

There were 77 people registered as residents in the building at the time of the blaze. Not all were yet accounted for at the time of writing. The injured, many of whom suffered broken bones after jumping out of upper floor windows, were taken to local hospitals. Two people were being treated for burns, including an 8-month-old baby.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk flew to Kamien Pomorski to inspect the damage, and promised aid for those who survived the fire. President Lech Kaczynski declared three days of national mourning to start at midnight, and was also on his way to Kamien Pomorski.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire but police and fire investigators were on the scene.

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► **Romania: housing programme to receive a boost** [04/05/2009]

It has been stated in the Romanian press recently that the Ministry of Development is to deliver 10.000 new apartments in 2010. Minister of Development, Vasile Blaga announced earlier this month that 'we will hand out keys to 10.000 new apartments under the housing programmes of the Ministry next year. The total amount for our housing programme will reach 1 billion lei.'

Of the 3.000 new apartments delivered in 2009, 1.600 will be put at the disposal of tenants evicted from formerly nationalised properties and 1.400 will be put at the disposal of social housing programmes.

► **Spain: The economic crisis hits hard** [04/05/2009]

Reports from Galicia, Madrid and Barcelona shows that the number of people seeking help with food and shelter at charitable organisations has radically increased in the last 6 months. In Galicia, the number of people seeking help from Caritas has increased four-fold on last year. Vicente Iglesias Martelo, president of Caritas Spain says that the profile of people asking for help are 'people we have never seen here before – local families, cleaning ladies, construction workers... people who can see no way out.'

Raquel Sancho from the organisation Comunidad de Sant Egidio in Barcelona has also seen a change in the profile of those living on the streets – they're no longer 'the same individuals we've always seen, now they are people who just a short while ago were living within what we'd consider normal circumstances.' Last summer the organisation helped 150 people a week with food and blankets – now the figure is more like 300, as even precarious employment is drying up.

In Madrid, the crisis and the unusually cold winter have led to an increase of 37.68% of people seeking help from the local authorities. 2.254 homeless people were helped this year, in comparison with 1635 last year. Two-thirds of the people were foreign, 92% were male, and most were on average 40 years old.

The last street count which took place in Madrid on the 3rd of March revealed that 535 people were sleeping on the street, while a total of 1.885 people slept in shelters and hostels.

► **TB: not sexy, just deadly** [04/05/2009]

Tuberculosis (TB) kills millions, especially among the poor and marginalized but is often overlooked, receiving less attention than higher-profile diseases like HIV/AIDS. Richard Smith, executive director of the Ovarations initiative to counter chronic disease in the developing world, has drawn attention to this problem in UK newspaper 'The Guardian' following the Stop TB Partner's Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

Although TB is curable there were more new cases in 2007 than ever before: 9.27m. There were also more deaths: 1.75m, of which 456,000 were of people with HIV. HIV patients are more likely to develop TB than those without HIV because of their damaged immune systems. One form of TB – XDR TB (extensively drug-resistant TB) – is currently incurable. There were an estimated 50,000 cases in 2007 and 30,000 deaths.

TB is strongly associated with poverty. The majority of cases and deaths are in the developing world, where indigenous people are four times more likely to develop TB; prisoners forty times; and the homeless sixty times.

There have been developments in treating TB the last few years. The millennium development goals call for a reversal of the rising incidence of TB, and this has been achieved, although there are more cases because the world's population has increased. The [Stop TB Partnership](#) aims to eliminate TB by 2050.

► **The Netherlands: New compulsory care strategy in Achterhoek** [04/05/2009]

Forty parties in Achterhoek (a region in the East of the Netherlands) are to sign a contract to dramatically reduce the number of homeless people in the region. The new strategy means that rough sleepers and other vulnerable people with multiple needs such as addiction, debt, ill health or mental health problems will be supported, even if they do not want to be. The parties signing the contract include all local authorities, police, NGOs, prisons, social housing providers, mental health services and the justice system. The region has seen a sharp increase in homelessness in recent years, especially amongst very vulnerable groups with addiction problems and mental health needs. The State Secretary responsible for homelessness was present when the contract was presented.

► **UK: Failed asylum seekers are not entitled to free medical treatment** [04/05/2009]

Failed asylum seekers are not entitled to free treatment on the UK's National Health Service, the Court of Appeal has ruled. However, hospitals can decide themselves whether to treat individuals if they cannot pay. Judges recently ruled on a test case which will affect a large number of vulnerable people seeking medical help for serious illness. They concluded that a failed asylum seeker is not ordinarily resident in the UK and therefore not eligible for free treatment. The judges also ruled that government guidance was not clear enough in indicating the fact that hospitals should consider covering the cost of treatment in cases where the patient cannot.

The health secretary, Alan Johnson, who took the case to the appeal court, welcomed the decision. He said that his department accepted the lack of clarity in the official guidance for hospitals and would amend them.

Refugee and health charities expressed dismay at the decision. 'To refuse treatment to those people simply because they cannot pay for it is appalling and inhumane' said Donna Covey, Chief Executive of the Refugee Council. Deborah Jack, of the National Aids Trust said anxiety over medical bills would deter many people from seeking the care they needed. She called for the government to end its policy of ill-health for the most destitute.

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► **US: Gates Foundation announces USD 60 million towards new initiatives to end family homelessness in Washington State** [04/05/2009]

A new initiative in Washington State to reduce family homelessness by 50 percent has been boosted by a 60 million USD grant from the Gates Foundation. The money will be spent by a consortium of 24 groups, including state and local government, housing authorities, not-for-profit organisations and private companies to reduce shelter stays for homeless families with children and to improve services, so that at-risk families can avoid the streets.

The new effort will employ a strategy favoured by the Gates Foundation and many other leading funders of using pilot programs to test new approaches for ending homelessness in the King-Snohomish-Pierce county regions with the goal of expanding successful strategies state-wide over the next decade.

Under the memorandum, partners pledged to embrace specific principals including funding early intervention and prevention programs, providing services for specific family needs and increasing economic opportunities through education and workforce assistance.

## News from the United Nations

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► **Latest issue of UNECE newsletter now out!** [04/05/2009]

The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management and the Working Party on Land Administration have published their Vital Spaces newsletter. Topics in the latest issue include affordable housing as a priority for overcoming the crisis, housing stock degradation and housing for the working poor. Download the [latest issue](#) here. See the [UNECE publications page](#) for previous issues.

## Announcements

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► **Post-graduate thesis: The life path of homeless people with dogs** [04/05/2009]

Christophe Blanchard, a sociology student of the university of Evry Val d'Essonne has written a PHD thesis in French on the life-path of homeless people with dogs. He contends that this phenomenon remains poorly understood and researched by policy makers and poses a number of problems for social workers who don't always know what to do when faced with clients and their dogs.

The aim of the thesis is to explain the phenomenon and suggest better adapted solutions to decision makers and social workers when faced with vulnerable clients and their pets.

For more information, please contact Christophe Blanchard, [chrbb Blanchard@yahoo.fr](mailto:chrbb Blanchard@yahoo.fr)

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► **Social Inclusion Games, 17 August – 23 August 2009, Odense, Denmark** [04/05/2009]

The Social Inclusion Games is a partnership between the National Association of Activity Centres, the Danish Sports Organisation for Socially Marginalised People, the Municipality of Odense and the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Social Inclusion Games will be the biggest sporting event ever held for socially marginalised people on Danish soil – some 1.000 athletes from Denmark and abroad are expected to travel to Odense from 17 August – 23 August this summer to compete in a number of sports.

The organisers of the Games wish to invite one team from each of the 27 EU countries. Participants could be people who are homeless, live in sheltered accommodation, make use of care and treatment institutions, or other services for the socially marginalised. Accommodation and meals will be taken care of by the Danish organisers. It is up to the individual country to cover travel expenses.

For more information, please see [www.ul2009.dk](http://www.ul2009.dk).

If you wish to register a team, or have further questions, please contact Torben Sneibjerg, ([Torben.lvs@lavs.dk](mailto:Torben.lvs@lavs.dk)) from the Danish Sports Organisation for Socially Marginalised People.

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► **UNECE Workshop on Homelessness, 18-19 May 2009, Oslo** [04/05/2009]

This workshop has been organised by Husbanken to facilitate exchange on homelessness between UNECE countries. Fighting homelessness is a challenge for the whole ECE region – as there are no easy and rapid solutions to this challenge, this workshop encourages UNECE countries to exchange experiences on the homelessness situation in their countries and the key factors needed to work on solutions

Three plenary sessions, each with four speakers, will focus on the following issues:

1. The extent and manifestations of homelessness in different parts of the ECE region
2. How homelessness is connected to social housing policy in general terms
3. Policy means and strategies to prevent and fight homelessness of different manifestations, types and causes

For further details please go to see the [workshop page](#) on Husbanken's website.

## Publications

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► **Australia: 'What makes case management work for people experiencing homelessness? Evidence for practice'** [04/05/2009]

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has published research into the effectiveness of case management in working with people experiencing homelessness. The research aims to provide an evidence-based understanding of how case management works to contribute to the development of effective responses to the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Download the [full report](#) here.

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► **PICUM: 'Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions'** [04/05/2009]

This report from the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants concerns the general lack of protection of undocumented children in EU and the deterioration of the situation that has been observed in almost all Member States. Download the [full report](#) here.

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► **Scotland: 'The facts: bad housing and homelessness for children in Scotland 2009'** [04/05/2009]

Shelter has published a research report on bad housing and homelessness for children in Scotland. The study reveals that sixty children become homeless in Scotland every day and that the number of homeless families with children has increased by 18% over five years. Download the [full report](#) here.

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► **UK: 'Longitudinal study to evaluate the hostel decommissioning programme'** [04/05/2009]

The University of York's Centre for Housing Policy, funded by Glasgow City Council, has been commissioned by the Glasgow Homelessness Partnership (GHP) to evaluate the effectiveness of a resettlement programme for former hostel residents. While the key focus of the evaluation is the perspectives and experiences of former hostel residents, the research will also take account of the views of staff involved in the hostel closure programme from across homelessness, housing, social work and health services. Download the [full report](#) or the [executive summary](#) here.

## News from the Council of Europe

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► **Congress of local authorities combating domestic violence against women** [04/05/2009]

The Congress of Local Authorities at the Council of Europe has passed a recommendation on combating domestic violence against women. Recommendation 60 (2009) highlights the fact that there are women in all the towns and regions of Europe experiencing physical, sexual or psychological violence at home. This violence is one of the most widespread human rights violations. The recommendation states that it is a matter of urgency that Member States take a series of measures in this regard, in particular in the spheres of legislative framework and global policies, support services, data collection and awareness-raising, information and education.

Read the [full recommendation](#) here.



**The FEANTSA Flash is supported by  
the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).**

This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/progress/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html)

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