



FEANTSA Flash  
January 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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- ▶ **FEANTSA office collecting information on quality agreements and standards in homeless services** [30/01/2009]

In order to feed into EU debates on quality of social services, the FEANTSA office has started collecting information on quality agreements and quality standards in the homeless sector across Europe.

We are also interested in the impact of quality standards on the functioning of homeless services and on homeless service users. If you have any information on this in your country, please send it to the FEANTSA office at [liz.gosme@feantsa.org](mailto:liz.gosme@feantsa.org) by the end of February.

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- ▶ **FEANTSA on Facebook!** [30/01/2009]

In keeping up with the current trend of social networking tools, FEANTSA has recently launched a FEANTSA group page on Facebook. Just log into Facebook and search on the word FEANTSA to leave messages, chat with other FEANTSA members, upload documents and photos and connect to the FEANTSA Facebook world!

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- ▶ **FEANTSA seminar on local homeless strategies – Save the date!** [30/01/2009]

The 2009 FEANTSA seminar on local homeless strategies will be hosted by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on Tuesday, 28 April 2009. The theme of the seminar will be about bridging the gap between EU ambitions on homelessness and local realities, with a focus on the impact of the economic crisis on tackling homelessness at local level (impact on profiles of homelessness, impact on budgets and impact on strategies). This seminar will bring together 80-100 participants from across Europe, and namely local practitioners working on homelessness who wish to gather information and benefit from transnational exchanges on this theme. •

For more information, please contact Liz Gosme ([liz.gosme@feantsa.org](mailto:liz.gosme@feantsa.org)) at the FEANTSA office.

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- ▶ **FEANTSA's access to housing anti-discrimination toolkit online** [30/01/2009]

Exclusion may take the form of discrimination along a number of dimensions and discrimination can contribute to housing exclusion. The present toolkit, which is aimed at organisations providing services to people who are homeless or faced with housing and social exclusion gives an overview of available international tools to tackle housing discrimination.

Visit <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/theme.asp?ID=5> to find out more about the toolkit.

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► **FEANTSA's European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 2 is now available!** [30/01/2009]

The *European Journal of Homelessness*, Volume 2 is now available! Entitled '*Effectiveness of Policies and Services for Homelessness*', the Journal provides a critical analysis of policy and practice on homelessness in Europe for policy makers, practitioners, researchers and academics. The aim is to stimulate debate on homelessness and housing exclusion at the European level and to facilitate the development of a stronger evidential base for policy development and innovation.

The Journal includes articles on homeless strategies in Portugal and Ireland; the effectiveness of homeless policies in the Scandinavian countries; explaining reductions in homelessness in Germany and England; media representations of homelessness and the link to (effective) policies in Slovenia; the French experience of a 'Consensus Conference' on homelessness; homelessness and the tertiary welfare system in Sweden and; the costs of homelessness - a perspective from the United States. Also included in the Journal are policy evaluations from the Czech Republic, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Poland, think pieces and reviews.

A copy will shortly be sent to all FEANTSA members. A hard copy can be purchased from the FEANTSA office for 20 Euro, by writing to [information@feantsa.org](mailto:information@feantsa.org). Each article is also available electronically on the FEANTSA research subsite - <http://www.feantsaresearch.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=1112>

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► **FEANTSA's European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 3 – Call for Papers** [30/01/2009]

The theme for Volume 3 (2009) of the *European Journal of Homelessness* is *Governance and Homelessness*. The term governance generally is taken to refer to emerging methods of governing where the boundaries between and within public, private and the not-for profit sectors have blurred, and highlights the importance of multi-level government structures such as the EU for the spread of new modes of governance. The Editors welcome the submission of articles that explore dimensions of '*Governance and Homelessness*', in particular articles that consider issues such as: collaborative governance, good governance, the enabling state, policy implementation, evidence based policy, participatory democracy, accountability, meta-governance and regulation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather is indicative of the range of issues that are pertinent to the theme of the Journal.

Manuscripts should be submitted as a Word file e-mail attachment to Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan ([tosullvn@tcd.ie](mailto:tosullvn@tcd.ie)) by **30th April 2009**.

For more information on the call for papers, and for notes to contributors and details for submission, please visit <http://www.feantsaresearch.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=1112>

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► **FEANTSA's new research website is up and running!** [30/01/2009]

The FEANTSA website continues to evolve with the aim of making information more accessible and visible to its many thousands of users. The research outcomes produced by FEANTSA's Observatory on Homelessness were becoming too substantial to contain on merely a few pages, so an entire new research subsite has been created. It can be accessed from FEANTSA's website by clicking on FEANTSA Research, or by going directly to [www.feantsaresearch.org](http://www.feantsaresearch.org).

Here, you can download articles from the latest European Journal of Homelessness, statistics, reports on policies on homelessness in Europe, thematic reports and books, as well as find out more information on FEANTSA's research conferences.

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► **New policy statement on 'Access to employment for people experiencing homelessness'** [30/01/2009]

This document highlights the shortcomings of European as well as national employment policies and sets out recommendations to make these policies more effective for people experiencing homelessness in the future. The recommendations are based on the findings of FEANTSA's European Report 2007 "Multiple Barriers, Multiple Solutions" which provides an overview about the employment situation of people experiencing homelessness in 16 EU member states.

Download '[Access to employment for people experiencing homelessness](#)'.

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► **Right to housing: FEANTSA's collective complaint against Slovenia admissible** [30/01/2009]

FEANTSA has lodged a collective complaint against Slovenia for non compliance with Article 31, 16 and E of the revised European Social Charter, which are respectively devoted to the right to housing, to the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection and to non-discrimination.

The complaint concerns the situation of tenants living in so-called "restituted" (denationalised) flats, who are treated differently from other tenants of former publicly owned housing, and whose rights have been undermined by a series of measures taken by the national authorities since 1991, thus increasing their vulnerability to housing exclusion. FEANTSA hopes that the complaint will act as leverage for change.

The Council of Europe European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) has declared the complaint admissible in December 2008. Following the procedure, the Slovenian government has been invited to send its submissions on the merits of the complaint.

The full text of the complaint as well as the ECSR decision are available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Complaints/Complaints\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Complaints/Complaints_en.asp)

For more details on FEANTSA's work on housing rights, please visit our web page: <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/theme.asp?ID=5>

## News from the European Union

### ► Euro area – unemployment up to 7.8% [30/01/2009]

The euro area rate of unemployment was at 7.8% in November 2008, compared with 6.9% in November 2007.

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, estimates that 17,466 million men and women in the EU27, of which 12,180 million were in euro area, were unemployed in November 2008. Compared with November 2007, unemployment went up by 1,134,000 in the EU27 and by 1,059,000 in the euro area.

13 Member States recorded a fall in their unemployment rate, and 14 reported an increase. The largest falls in unemployment were in Poland (8.5% to 6.5%) and Slovakia (10.5% to 9.1%), and the highest increases in Spain (8.6% to 13.4%) and Estonia (4.1% to 8.3%).

In November 2008, the youth unemployment rate (under 25's) was 16.4% in both the euro area and the EU27.

### ► European Parliament adopts report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU [30/01/2009]

On 14th January the European Parliament (EP) adopted a report on the Situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2004-2008. The report, which was drafted by MEP Giusto Catania (GUE/NGL, Italy), was adopted by 401 votes in favour, 220 against and 67 abstentions.

The report sends a clear message from the EP on fundamental rights and contains several paragraphs which are relevant to the fight against homelessness and housing exclusion. When addressing social rights, it mentions that poverty and social exclusion can only be combated by guaranteeing fundamental rights and that these are indivisible and interdependent. The report states that extreme poverty and social exclusion are a violation of all fundamental rights. In a paragraph devoted to homelessness, the report takes up the requests contained in the [Written declaration on ending street homelessness](#) towards the European Commission on gathering data and towards Member States on devising "winter emergency plans" as part of a wider homeless strategy. Also, the report refers to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights viewpoint on adequate housing and to relevant EU and international tools aimed at the promotion of human rights.

The full text of the resolution is available on the [European Parliament's website](#).

### ► European Parliament calls for a more structured civil dialogue [30/01/2009]

Last week the European Parliament adopted a report by Polish Socialist MEP, Genowefa Grabowska, calling for a more structured civil dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society. The report calls for an inter-institutional agreement on civil dialogue that includes: binding guidelines on the appointment of civil society representatives; methods of consultation; and a funding of civil dialogue.

Download the [Grabowska report on the perspectives of developing civil dialogue under the Treaty of Lisbon](#).

### ► Homelessness and housing exclusion to be theme of EU "light year" 2009 [30/01/2009]

The social affairs ministries from 27 countries, which are represented in the intergovernmental body called the Social Protection Committee, have decided that “homelessness and housing exclusion” are to be a priority theme in the EU social inclusion strategy in 2009. This means that all countries will carry out stocktaking exercise to collate information on their homeless policies, homeless data, and governance issues in tackling homelessness.

The results of this stocktaking exercise will be available at the end of the year and will feed into a Joint Report on social inclusion to be published by the European Commission and the Council of Ministers early 2010. In addition, there will be small research seminars organised on this theme during the course of 2009 as there is currently research underway: one study is focusing on the relation between housing exclusion and the labour market, while the MPHASIS project is focusing on developing methodologies to build capacity of EU countries to measure homelessness.

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► **MPHASIS: Poland** [30/01/2009]

The MPHASIS Poland meeting took place on 5th December in Warsaw. Organised by the Polish members of FEANTSA and researcher Julia Wygnanska of FEANTSA’s European Observatory on Homelessness, it was coordinated by the Pomeranian Forum in Aid Getting Out of Homelessness. There were approximately 25 people from different organisations at the meeting including representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Infrastructure, Central Statistical Office, Prison Service, as well as Polish members of FEANTSA. Business sector organisations, such as Sygnity – a provider of IT solutions, and one of the commercial experts in data collection were also present at the meeting.

NGO’s and Ms Wygnanska presented various, non-comparative systems of data collection based on different definitions of homelessness. According to the Central Statistical Office, the definition of homelessness should be worked out through the cooperation of a public agenda and NGO’s for the 2011 census.

Identification of the existing registers of people who are homeless is crucial for the full presentation of the phenomenon, as is cooperation between all stakeholders. The next meeting will be devoted to formulating the definition of homelessness and will be held next month.

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► **New website on Social Inclusion is now online** [30/01/2009]

The website on ‘Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion’ has been revamped and is now online.

Under ‘Key Themes’ is a section on ‘Homelessness and Housing Exclusion’ where reports and other documents produced by Peer Review process or by the Network of Independent Experts can be found.

Visit the website here: <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/>

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► **Priorities for Czech EU presidency** [30/01/2009]

In January 2009, the Czech Republic took over the presidency of the European Union and presented an outline of their priorities. The Czech work programme will focus on four areas in terms of employment and social policy.

The presidency aims to highlight the advantages of full liberalisation of worker movement within the EU and to work on completing the modernisation of the legislation on social security concerning migrant workers. The presidency also plans to implement guidelines for growth and employment, giving priority to increasing market flexibility, to flexible employment relationships and social services.

The third area focuses on support for working families within the EU policy framework. The presidency will consider the issue of parents who stay at home to look after their children and its relation to employment policy. Finally, the presidency will look at the role of social services as a tool for active social inclusion of the most disadvantaged people. The presidency will address the issue of availability of social services (location and financing) and support the combination of policies in the areas of the labour market inclusion policy, workforce mobility, support for adequate income and high quality accessible and efficient services.

## News from our Members

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► **AMI: The ‘new poor’ in Portugal – they work but cannot afford housing** [30/01/2009]

According to statistics published by FEANTSA member Assistência Médica Internacional (AMI), roughly 12% of homeless people who seek assistance from the organisation have a job. Jorge dos Santos, from Catholic homeless charity, ‘Comunidade Vida e Paz’, tells the story of an employed man working in the building industry for a minimum wage who “earns enough to support himself but not enough for a home. I asked him how he was able to work everyday without somewhere decent to go home to...We were able to find him a bed in a shelter”.

The shelter, ‘l’Abrigo da Graça’, requires that people staying there pay 90 euros a month, be active in looking for employment, and not take drugs and alcohol whilst on site. The main work of the shelter is to assist people in finding a way back into society. Pedro Sousa, head of l’Abrigo da Graça, says: “Most of them stay here for six months, but some stay for three years maybe more”. Last year, 1,448 homeless individuals sought help from AMI, 634 for the first time.

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► **Depaul UK: New name and new vision for youth homelessness** [30/01/2009]

UK organisation and FEANTSA member, Depaul UK (formerly Depaul Trust), has changed its name to represent the growth and development of the organisation over the last 20 years. They have recently released a strategic document, 'Delivering Lasting Change for Social Impact', that outlines six corporate goals for the next five years in tackling youth homelessness. Depaul UK is the largest charity in the UK that deals solely on youth homelessness.

The strategic document focuses on community based work for young people and looking at how to improve their engagement within their communities. Also highlighted are ways of reducing the number of young people who find themselves in prison and considering other methods of reducing youth offending.

Depaul UK now offers six complimentary areas of work: accommodation and resettlement, training and employment schemes, family mediation services, volunteering and mentoring, prison work and community work.

Download ['Delivering Lasting Change for Social Impact'](#).

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#### ► **Nadeje: Prague shelters are stretched** [30/01/2009]

There is only a single doctor that gives medical care to the homeless at the 'Nadeje' (Hope) shelter in Prague says the head of the shelter, Ales Strnad. There is only one nurse at the shelter, and it has not managed to get a contract to employ a doctor.

People who are homeless can go to the shelters for food, clothes and to wash, but can also receive advice and request documents and ask about welfare benefits and housing. Milan Egem, head of the Nadeje shelter in Bolzanova street for youth (under the age of 26), says they receive about 75 people a day. During the winter so far, the shelters have been full, says Egem: "As soon as a place becomes vacant, it is immediately occupied. There is the instinct of self-preservation".

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#### ► **Shelter Cymru: Education to prevent homelessness** [30/01/2009]

Visitors to the Education Zone at the 2008 FEANTSA conference in Cardiff were given the opportunity to see how education is being used to prevent homelessness and to raise general awareness and tolerance of housing issues in Wales.

Shelter Cymru's Education Service demonstrated its range of education resources, including Housemate and the Peer Learning Project and how they are being used in schools, colleges and youth clubs to combat future youth homelessness.

Llamau's Learning 4 Life showed how their learning programme is helping young homeless people to move their lives forward positively through work, training and education. Their Emphasis project works directly with young people to educate them about housing and homelessness in a creative and interactive manner.

The Institute of Digital Learning at the University of Wales, Newport showcased its innovative Homelessness Awareness Diversity e-training Toolkit for frontline service sector workers. It highlights barriers to learning and employment opportunities faced by homeless and vulnerably housed people.

Visit [Shelter Cymru's Education Service](#).

## Homelessness in the Headlines

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#### ► **Czech Republic: Nearly 3000 violate Prague's new public drinking ban** [30/01/2009]

The Prague ban on drinking alcohol in public places which came into force on 7<sup>th</sup> July last year, has been violated by almost 3000 people so far. The directive states that drinking alcohol is banned near schools, metro stations, health centres, playgrounds, at bus and tram stops and in certain parks and streets, particularly in the historical city centre.

The ban, primarily aimed at people who are homeless and "aggressive drunkards", has reduced the amount of people drinking in the streets according to the police. Around 1,700 have been fined so far for drinking in the street, though police admit that most do not pay the fine because they often cannot afford to.

The ban on drinking alcohol in public areas is also valid in several other Czech towns, such as Cesky Tesin, Mlada Boleslav, and Vsetin. More towns are expected to introduce the ban in the future.

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#### ► **Europe gripped by cold spell** [30/01/2009]

The arctic cold that has spread across Europe so far this year has taken its toll on the poor and most vulnerable. The Polish Ministry of the Interior recently announced that the death toll from hypothermia is now at 82, with 23 having died since November 2008. Five people (three of whom were homeless) died in the Kherson region of the Ukraine where temperatures plummeted to minus 19 degrees Celsius.

43 people, including a three month old baby, have died in Romania since late December due to the extreme cold with temperatures dropping to minus 31 degrees Celsius. Many of those who died were homeless, as media reports claim that the country has few shelters that can accommodate everybody.

Hungarian press have reported that two dead homeless people were discovered in a street in Budapest and one elderly person died in a house with no heating in the city of Szeged. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, in the Serbian city of Novi Sad, 80,000 people lost access to heating. In the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, women huddled around heaters and hospitals had to delay operations, following Russia's action of gas cuts as part of its payment dispute with the Ukraine.

FEANTSA's Written Declaration on ending street homelessness, adopted already in April of last year, called on Member States to devise 'winter emergency plans' as part of a wider homelessness strategy.

► **France: Housing Minister visits Denmark for tips** [30/01/2009]

French Housing Minister, Christine Boutin, visited Denmark last week to look at the Danish way of dealing with homelessness. Why Denmark? "Because they have immigration and a qualitative system when it comes to conducting a homelessness census", says the Minister. The city of Copenhagen conducted a census in February 2007 that found 1,886 homeless individuals, including 288 rough sleepers. In France, the number of people who are homeless varies between 15,000 to 100,000 depending on those who may be considered 'temporarily' homeless and those who are in a constant situation of homelessness.

Ms Boutin was accompanied by several heads of French NGO's and voluntary organisations such as Secours Catholique. Mrs Boutin was impressed by the country's "pragmatism," citing the fact that shelters are not closed during the day, and the various projects aimed at involving women, young people, and rehabilitation centres for those with addiction issues. Also encouraging was the presence of teams around bus and train stations, going out to where the homeless are and giving advice and aid. "That is something extraordinary", said Alain Duchêne, President of the Salvation Army.

The Housing Minister now intends to conduct a full census of all homeless people in France. "This isn't going to be like creating a filing system with peoples' names, but to find out the numbers of women, men, young people who are homeless", she said, adding that, "This will also help increase public awareness of the problem".

► **Germany: Berlin shelter is "most luxurious in the world"** [30/01/2009]

A hostel for the homeless in the 'Haus Schöneweide' Berlin suburb, has undergone a 100,000 euro revamp and is now called the "swankiest" shelter in the world. The hostel, called 'Reichtum 2' (meaning 'wealth'), is for homeless men who are also chronic alcoholics and who mostly suffer from mental disorders.

The renovation was undertaken by Berlin-based concept artist Miriam Kilali who describes the hostel as "a living painting". Making reference to the name, she says, "It means wealth and is an attempt to give the 21 men who live here a sense of self-worth and a decent place where they might find dignity and respect – wealth of a sorts, after all they've been through".

Residents themselves were originally sceptical about the refurbishment. Deputy Manager of the hostel, Christoph Brenneis, says that, "They don't tend to like change, because they've generally had too much change in their lives. But we put together a prototype room and gradually they started to come round to the idea – and even helped with the refurbishment and choosing the decor".

Italian wallpapers, gold trimmings, parquet flooring, red carpeting and crystal chandeliers have replaced the tired, lino flooring and strip lighting. Jürgen Roscher, a resident, says, "Before it was a cheap boarding house, now it's the Hilton".

► **Ireland: Government's draft legislation on begging draws fierce criticism** [30/01/2009]

The Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) has expressed grave concern about a draft government legislation which includes a fine of up to 700 euro and/or a month in prison for people who engage in "persistent" begging. In November 2008, Justice Minister, Dermot Ahern unveiled new laws which would "crackdown on begging" by outlawing the practice where it is accompanied by harassment, obstruction or intimidation. The IHRC has described this measure as "draconian" and could result in criminalisation of the most vulnerable.

The IHRC states that the Criminal Justice (Public Order) (Amendment) Bill 2008 may interfere with the right to freedom of expression and the right to communicate. Commissioner Alice Leahy of the IHRC says: "The government should not criminalise vulnerable people who beg. Many vulnerable people are often left with no option but to beg as a result of mental health or addiction problems which they must endure without the support they need". Chief Executive of the IHRC, Éamonn MacAodha added, "In many cases begging indicates a failure by the State to adequately uphold the right to an adequate standard of living for all members of our society equally."

The IHRC's key recommendations in relation to the Scheme of the Bill are: the removal of the definition of "persistent begging", the removal of excessive penalties for not having a fixed address and the removal of the section that deals with the powers of arrest as they do not constitute a proportionate response to begging as defined in the legislation.

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► **Ireland: Homeless Agency Partnership is confident of achieving its goal** [30/01/2009]

The Homeless Agency Partnership made a submission to the government in December based on a fundamental review that has taken place on homelessness in Dublin, which would help them achieve their 2010 vision of eliminating long-term homelessness and rough sleeping in the capital. The submission also contained a proposal on the redirection of existing resources towards long-term housing provision that would enable this goal to be achieved.

The director of the Homeless Agency, Cathal Morgan, said: "We need to move people out of temporary accommodation into long-term housing with supports if required. It has always been the focus of our 10 year vision and there has never been a better opportunity for this to start to happen than now".

The Partnership also revealed that foreign nationals counted for 38% of rough sleepers in Dublin last year compared to 9% in 2005. Several homeless organisations have reported a significant increase in the numbers of foreign nationals using their services. Alice Leahy, director of the charity Trust, estimated that up to 50% were now non-Irish, and generally males between the ages of 30 and 50.

Immigrants' entitlements are limited by the habitual residence condition, a measure introduced by the government in May 2004 due to fears of "welfare tourism" among citizens of the 10 states that joined the EU that month. In general, foreign nationals cannot claim unemployment benefit or other social assistance payments unless they have been resident in the State for two years. Although the system was reformed in 2006 to provide supplementary welfare payments to those who have worked previously, and officials have been given some discretion in deciding on applications, support groups claim the condition partly explains the increase in homeless figures.

Download ['Counted In, 2008: A Report on the Extent of Homelessness in Dublin'](#).

Download the ['Evaluation of Homeless Services 2008 Series'](#).

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► **Italy: 19th edition of 'Michelin guide for the poor' is published** [30/01/2009]

The community Saint Egidio, a charity that helps poor people published the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of their 'DOVE' guidebook that contains information on where poor people can find places to eat, sleep and wash in Rome. This guide, called the 'Michelin guide for the poor', gives information on the 27 canteens, 35 dormitories, 24 free health clinics, and 12 bath-shower facilities in the capital. The charity believes that there are about 7,000 people who are homeless in Rome, including 4,500 rough sleepers and 2,500 who are in sheltered accommodation.

A Romanian woman and her son were found dead on 26<sup>th</sup> December due to a fire that burnt down their hut in the pine forest of Castelfusano in the suburbs of Rome. The city mayor, Gianni Alemanno, stated that the Castelfusano shanty town would be "gone before the summer". The shanty town, that is mostly full of Romanian immigrants, reflects the reality of inadequate housing in Italy. Approximately 20,000 people are estimated to be living in housing conditions that are deplorable.

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► **Slovenia: Ljubljana needs more shelters** [30/01/2009]

There is currently debate in the Slovenian media as to whether the State or local authorities in the capital, Ljubljana, should provide more facilities for its homeless population. Some have put the number of people who are homeless in Slovenia at above 1,500. The capital alone has approximately 400-700 homeless people. Two shelters operating in the city can only offer a total of 62 beds – accommodating only a tenth of the homeless population.

There are also four day care centres that offer hot food, clothing, showers and laundry. Boris Kosec, head of a shelter in the Poljane borough, says that they receive about 500 people every year. The canteen gives out free hot meals everyday between 11am and 1pm to about 110 people.

Tilen Princic of the 'Vincencijeva zveza dobrote' charity says that the current cold spell is threatening many more lives within the homeless population. The day-care centre is visited by 60-80 homeless people every day and that even when the centre is closed, volunteers are still available to offer help. This may be legal advice, counselling, housing problems or help with employment.

In a shelter for people who have drug addictions, people can get assistance in obtaining social and health care benefits. Staff member, Elvira Delic, is confident that their services help in reducing crime rates in the capital. "The shelter is free. Upon arrival, everyone needs to sign a statement that they agree with the rules, whilst those getting welfare benefits pay 60 euros a month", she says. The shelter can accommodate 16 people, plus three workers for up to three months, though this period of time may be extended. Delic believes that Ljubljana needs at least four additional shelters such as this with 20 beds each.

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► **Spain: IMF mission discourages building subsidised homes** [30/01/2009]

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), as part of its regular consultative process under Article IV of its 'Articles of Agreement', launched a mission to look at the economic and financial situation in Spain. In its concluding statement of the mission, the IMF charts the 15 years of growth led by the housing boom, but states that financial near term prospects are "sombre and uncertain".

With regards to housing, the IMF stresses that the rate of building permits and construction of housing are falling thereby decreasing the construction activity. The IMF believes adjusting housing policies would be beneficial, such as: activating the rental market, and getting rentals to absorb. This would help labour mobility and allow vulnerable families to find shelter at a reasonable price. Mortgage assistance to newly unemployed workers (to defer half their monthly payment for up to 2 years) would be helpful in limiting foreclosures.

Building more subsidised homes, however, is discouraged as these add to the inventory of vacant homes, and markets for subsidised homes are often "distorted and untransparent". The mission reports that the benefits do not always go to those intended, and suggests that assistance based on means-tested income for rentals is preferable to more construction and home-ownership subsidies.

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► **Spain: Results of the first attempt to quantify homelessness are published** [30/01/2009]

During 2008 more than 1000 volunteers took part in Spain's first attempt to quantify homelessness in the three Spanish cities considered most affected by the problem. The project began in Madrid, was continued in Barcelona and concluded in Lleida.

It was coordinated by Professor Pedro Cabrera, a sociologist, who headed a group of sociologists from the Papal University of Comillas in Madrid and the Autonomia University in Barcelona. The project results reveal that the majority of homeless people in Spain are around 41 years old, male, and not of Spanish origin. 9% are university graduates. Madrid has around 651 rough sleepers (10.9% female) who are equally Spanish and foreign nationals. Around 10% were found to be higher education graduates and 75.3% of interviewees were single and had been homeless for more than a year.

The streets of Barcelona have 912 homeless people sleeping rough whose profile is similar to the one found in Madrid. Barcelona had the highest percentage of homeless youth who accounted for 39.1% of interviewees. 8.9% were young people with university degrees who had been homeless for a year. In the city of Lleida, researchers counted 70 homeless people; 3% were women and 75% were foreign nationals.

The final report on the project was funded by FEANTSA member Caixa Catalunya, and is entitled '¿Quien duerme en la calle?' (Who's sleeping on the street?).

Download the report '[¿Quien duerme en la calle?](#)' (in Spanish).

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► **UK: Welsh project on the role of housing offenders and ex-offenders** [30/01/2009]

A project funded through the Welsh Assembly Government's good practice in homelessness programme addressed the difficulties faced in housing offenders and ex-offenders, particularly those identified as 'high risk'.

The project ran between September 2007 and June 2008 headed by consultants Tamsin Stirling and Caroline Humphreys. The focus was on examining the arrangements and practice for accommodating offenders from the age of 18, particularly focusing on high risk offenders. In detail, the project looked at levels of housing demand from ex-offenders including their routes into housing and the housing supply for this group; they also reviewed the current practice and provision across the UK. The project additionally identified ways in which the provision of appropriate accommodation for this group could be improved.

The project outputs include a research report entitled 'Necessary but not sufficient: housing and the reduction of re-offending' and a summary of this report; a guide on housing options and working with offenders and ex-offenders that include a wide-range of practical examples called 'Bringing it all back home'. There is also a series of six advice notes aimed at housing and criminal justice audiences and a fact sheet about offending, re-offending and accommodation.

A second phase of the project will provide regionally-based training to housing and criminal justice practitioners across Wales.

For more information and for links to all the project outputs, visit <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/accommodation-and-ex-offenders-project>.

## Announcements

### ► **Thames Reach: Reconnection project launched for Central and Eastern European rough sleepers** [30/01/2009]

UK homeless organisation, Thames Reach, is launching a project aimed at returning rough sleepers from Central and Eastern Europe to their country of origin. The project aims to link up men and women with support services in their own country that can help them get started with accommodation and help them deal with any mental health or addiction problems.

The 'London Reconnection Project' is for homeless people from Central or Eastern Europe in the UK who have expressed a wish to return to their home countries. Thames Reach Chief Executive, Jeremy Swain, says: "Whilst the majority of people who have entered the country to work since European Union enlargement in 2004 have thrived and contributed to the UK economy, a small number of people have struggled". He added, "We will also continue to provide support to those rough sleepers who want to stay, though the assistance we can offer is limited to health, housing and welfare advice rather than accommodation".

## Publications

### ► **France – Report on need for accommodation and housing in Lyons and its suburbs** [30/01/2009]

This report was jointly written and published by a regional body focusing on social exclusion 'Mission Régionale d'Information sur l'Exclusion' and the network organisation 'Personne Dehors !'. It involved an inquiry, by means of a questionnaire, to find out the extent of the demand for accommodation and the absence of decent housing and accommodation in Lyon and its suburbs.

Download '[Les besoins en hébergement dans l'agglomération lyonnaise](#)' (in French).

### ► **UK – 'The prevalence of mental disorders among the homeless in western countries: systematic review and meta-regression analysis'** [30/01/2009]

This study published in December 2008 was carried out with the aim of providing a quantitative synthesis of the available evidence on mental health problems among people who are homeless. Research was conducted amongst homeless individuals in the UK, the US, mainland Europe and Australia.

Download '[The Prevalence of Mental Disorders among the Homeless in Western Countries: Systematic Review and Meta-Regression Analysis](#)'.



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)

**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.**