



FEANTSA Flash  
January 2010

## FEANTSA News

- ▶ Autumn 2009 edition of FEANTSA's tri-annual magazine *Homeless in Europe* now online!
- ▶ Call for papers out now! European Research Conference 'Understanding Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in the New European Context'
- ▶ European seminar on local homeless strategies – save the date!
- ▶ FEANTSA and coalition of social NGOs present their key messages for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion
- ▶ FEANTSA participation and homelessness videos online!
- ▶ Latest issue of the ENHW newsletter now available!
- ▶ Now available! Ending Homelessness Campaign Materials

## News from the European Union

- ▶ 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion Opens in Madrid
- ▶ City of Vienna hosts peer review on homelessness
- ▶ EU Network of independent experts on social inclusion publish report on Homelessness and housing exclusion across EU Member States

## News from the Council of Europe

- ▶ Housing rights: Landmark ruling by the Council of Europe

## News from our Members

- ▶ BAGW calls for decent homeless services as 14 homeless people die during the winter in Germany
- ▶ Housing Justice Organise Poverty & Homelessness Action Week
- ▶ Hungarian FEANTSA members, BMSZKI completes a Leonardo da Vinci Life Long Learning mobility project

## Homelessness in the Headlines

- ▶ Austria: New initiative raises awareness about homeless EU migrants in Vienna
- ▶ Czech Republic : At least 10 people have been killed from exposure this winter in Prague
- ▶ France : Collective of artists expose anti-homeless landscaping and decoration

- ▶ **France: Homeless and poorly housed people to have better access to the national ombudsman**
- ▶ **Ireland: Migrants from new EU states 'denied welfare'**
- ▶ **Italy: Reports of growing demand for homeless services**

## Announcements

- ▶ **Eurostat news release on living conditions in Europe**

## Publications

- ▶ **UK: 'The impact of devolution: Housing and homelessness'**
- ▶ **US: National Alliance to End Homelessness toolkit 'Organizational change: adopting a housing first approach.'**

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

## FEANTSA News

- ▶ **Autumn 2009 edition of FEANTSA's tri-annual magazine Homeless in Europe now online!** [02/02/2010]  
The Autumn 2009 edition of FEANTSA's tri-annual magazine Homeless in Europe is available on our website. The edition is on the theme of 'Participation of People Experiencing Homelessness: Sharing the Power and Working Together'. Access the magazine from our [Homeless in Europe](#) page.

---

- ▶ **Call for papers out now! European Research Conference 'Understanding Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in the New European Context'** [02/02/2010]  
The 5th Annual Research Conference on Homelessness in Europe will take place on the 17th September 2010 in Budapest. It is co-organised by FEANTSA's European Observatory on Homelessness, the European Network for Housing Research Working Group on Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion and the Metropolitan Research Institute Budapest.  
The key theme of the conference is "Understanding Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in the New European Context." Although a particular focus of the conference is on understanding homelessness and housing exclusion in Central and Eastern Europe, the conference will also include open sessions for which we welcome papers on the broad theme of 'homelessness and housing exclusion' from across Europe.  
See the European Observatory on Homelessness website for the full [call for papers](#). The deadline for submission is 26th March 2010. Submissions and further enquiries should be directed to [feantsaconference@busch-geertsema.eu](mailto:feantsaconference@busch-geertsema.eu)

---

- ▶ **European seminar on local homeless strategies – save the date!** [02/02/2010]  
On Friday the 4th June 2010 in Brussels, the European Committee of the Regions (together with FEANTSA and HABITACT) will host a European seminar on local homeless strategies. As in [previous years](#), this seminar will be open to local practitioners from across Europe who work on tackling and preventing homelessness in their towns and cities. The aim of the seminar is to provide practical information on challenges and opportunities for effective local policy-making on homelessness, and will be an opportunity to network and meet people working on the design and implementation of homeless policies. More information will be available soon on the FEANTSA website: <http://www.feantsa.org/>

---

- ▶ **FEANTSA and coalition of social NGOs present their key messages for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion** [02/02/2010]  
For the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, around 40 European NGO networks have created a joined coalition – the EY 2010 NGO Coalition - to put forward common messages and key demands for the outcome of the year. On the 14th of January 2010, two days before the official Opening of the European Year in Madrid by the European institutions, this coalition of NGOs active in fighting poverty and social exclusion held a press conference to present its key demands for 2010. The press conference took place at Les Petits Riens in Brussels, which is a social economy enterprise. FEANTSA director Freek Spinnewijn reiterated that "this European Year must also follow up on the declaration adopted by the European Parliament on ending street homelessness". The coalition also took the opportunity to launch its website <http://www.endpoverty.eu/>, where you can read the joint demands.

---

- ▶ **FEANTSA participation and homelessness videos online!** [02/02/2010]  
In the context of its Annual Theme on participation and homelessness in 2009, FEANTSA collected short videos and films about homelessness and participation from across Europe. The films present good practices of participation as well as information about homeless services and the experience of homelessness from a number of countries. A selection of these videos is now available on the [FEANTSA website](#).

---

- ▶ **Latest issue of the ENHW newsletter now available!** [02/02/2010]

The winter 2009 edition of the newsletter of the European Network of Health Workers is out now! You can access it from the [ENHW page](#).

---

► **Now available! Ending Homelessness Campaign Materials** [02/02/2010]

In the framework of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, FEANTSA is running a campaign on ending homelessness. The central message of this campaign is that homelessness can and should be ended. In order to achieve this, FEANTSA calls for the development of integrated homelessness strategies, which address the following goals:

- 1.No one sleeping rough
- 2.No one living in emergency accommodation longer than is an 'emergency'
- 3.No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on
- 4.No one leaving an institution without housing options
- 5.No young people becoming homeless as a result of the transition to independent living

The campaign materials are now available from the [FEANTSA members' only section](#). Please contact Ruth Owen ([ruth.owen@feantsa.org](mailto:ruth.owen@feantsa.org)) with any questions on this.

---

## News from the European Union

► **2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion Opens in Madrid** [02/02/2010]

On the 21st January, the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency of the EU launched the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion with an inaugural conference in Madrid hosted by the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero and the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities said: "One in six people in Europe face a daily struggle to make ends meet, but poverty can also affect the rest of us – and our societies as a whole. While most of the tools for tackling poverty are at national level, three quarters of Europeans also expect the EU to help. The European Year puts this issue at the top of the agenda so that Europe as a whole can join forces to fight poverty and social exclusion." Find out more from the [official website](#) of the European Year.

---

► **City of Vienna hosts peer review on homelessness** [02/02/2010]

A peer review is an event where a host country presents good practice or a policy reform to a selected group of decision-makers and experts from other countries and to stakeholders' representatives and European Commission officials. Peer reviews are a key instrument in the EU social inclusion and protection strategy and allow for mutual learning and the sharing of good practice. On the 12-13 November 2009, the City of Vienna and Austria's Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection carried out a peer review on homelessness, looking at existing data-collection instruments and exploring the reasons behind the ongoing rise in homelessness. Find out more from the [The Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion website](#).

---

► **EU Network of independent experts on social inclusion publish report on Homelessness and housing exclusion across EU Member States** [02/02/2010]

In the context of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), the EU Network of independent experts on social inclusion has published a key report on homelessness and housing exclusion in the 27 Member States of Europe. The report summarises the main findings from an analysis undertaken by the Network in 2009, the "light year" on homelessness and housing exclusion. It analyses social and economic inclusion of homeless people and the access to adequate housing. The report also puts forward 15 concrete suggestions for addressing the main barriers progress national and EU levels in the fight against homelessness and housing exclusion. As the Network's reports are key instruments in the social inclusion strand of the Social OMC, these recommendations represent real opportunities for policy progress on homelessness at European level. Download the full report [here](#).

---

## News from the Council of Europe

► **Housing rights: Landmark ruling by the Council of Europe** [02/02/2010]

On the 1st February 2010 the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the Council of Europe body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the European Social Charter, reached the decision that Slovenia is in violation of the Charter with regards to housing rights. In the context of Collective complaint no. 53/2008 (launched by FEANTSA in 2008), the ECSR considered that downgrading tenants' legal protection is not in line with the international obligations deriving from the Social Charter. This decision provides case-law which will be useful in courts on a local, national and international level and is a step towards a more social Europe. Read the full FEANTSA press release [here](#) or see the [collective complaint page](#).

---

## News from our Members

► **BAGW calls for decent homeless services as 14 homeless people die during the winter in Germany** [02/02/2010]

At least 14 homeless men died in Germany this winter because they were sleeping rough in the cold, according to a recent press release of German FEANTSA member BAGW. This figure does not include any person who was found in a poor state of health and died later in hospital.

Most of the mainly older homeless men who died were found in small and middle sized towns. While the emergency support system for homeless people in larger cities usually works well during the winter time, there is still a lack of appropriate homeless service provision in rural areas.

"The fact that there still might be empty beds in a homeless shelter during the winter does not mean that there is no demand for services", explains BAGW Secretary General Thomas Specht.

BAGW highlights that the current support system is being rejected by many homeless people. Many people do not want to stay in big dormitories because they are afraid of theft, violence and dirt. Many homeless shelters do not allow residents to bring their dog with them and do not offer a minimum of privacy. More and more homeless people also refuse to engage with overly restrictive services where people are literally 'locked away' as of 8 pm.

BAGW calls on local authorities and service provider to invest in small and decentralised services for smaller groups of homeless people, including in rural areas. Services should provide single rooms that allow people to stay there during the day and bring their dog with them. In addition, people must be given the opportunity to stay for longer than just a few days. More services should also accommodate homeless couples.

#### ► **Housing Justice Organise Poverty & Homelessness Action Week** [02/02/2010]

FEANTSA members Housing Justice are holding Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2010, which will run from 30 January to 7 February. Co-organised by Housing Justice, Scottish Churches Housing Action, and Church Action on Poverty, the week seeks to make a difference in local communities throughout the UK via church networks. See <http://www.actionweek.org.uk/> for further info.

#### ► **Hungarian FEANTSA members, BMSZKI completes a Leonardo da Vinci Life Long Learning mobility project** [02/02/2010]

BMSZKI, Budapest City's homeless service provider (<http://www.bmszki.hu/>) successfully concluded a Leonardo da Vinci Life Long Learning mobility project in December 2009. They sent 16 staff members to 11 different cities all over Europe for a period of 2-15 weeks, to do "practical training" in homeless services. The host partners were mostly NGOs, and some services run by local authorities. The staff members involved were placed in specific projects where they spent around three days a week, and they were also shown other projects to help understand the whole network of services for homeless people in the host city. Upon their return they shared their learning with colleagues through an oral presentation with photos, as well as write a report of 25-40 pages about their experiences. BMSZKI are planning to run a similar exchange, sending as well as hosting social workers, in 2010-2011.

If you would like to find out more, please contact [feher.boroka@bmszki.hu](mailto:feher.boroka@bmszki.hu) for more information. Read a more detailed summary of the experience [here](#) and find out more about the programme from the Leonardo da Vinci programme [website](#).

## Homelessness in the Headlines

#### ► **Austria: New initiative raises awareness about homeless EU migrants in Vienna** [02/02/2010]

A new initiative "Obdachloses Europa in Wien" (Homeless Europe in Vienna) aims to raise awareness about the situation of homeless EU migrants in the Austrian capital. The initiative was created on the occasion of student protests at Vienna's universities in November 2009. Homeless people had joined the protest and camped with the students in the university building. After being evicted, they were sent to the homeless services of the city. However, as the majority of the people were EU migrants who were unemployed and had been resident for less than five years in the country, the city is not obliged to provide support to them.

Caritas in Vienna estimates that there are around 300 homeless people who are affected by this ruling. Around 65 of the people are currently provided for in a Caritas service which is funded through donations. The initiators of "Obdachloses Europa in Wien" argue that the City of Vienna has interpreted EU regulation in the area of social security in a more restrictive way than necessary and call for a European response to this problem.

#### ► **Czech Republic : At least 10 people have been killed from exposure this winter in Prague** [02/02/2010]

In mid-January the press announced that at least ten people had died in Prague due to the cold weather conditions. Jirina Ernestova, a spokeswoman for Prague Rescue Services, said the number of hypothermia cases had rocketed. Milan Pesak, a member of the municipal council in charge of healthcare, said the city homeless shelter had been filled to near-capacity during the cold weather. When temperatures are low, the city waives a fee of 20 crowns or just over \$1 per night.

#### ► **France : Collective of artists expose anti-homeless landscaping and decoration** [02/02/2010]

A collective of photographers and artists in France have hit the news by documenting anti-homeless urban design and publishing their photos online. They have drawn attention to the use of pebbles, spikes, low walls and other features to prevent homeless people from using public spaces. They draw attention to supposedly decorative design elements which are in fact designed to stop homeless people sitting or lying down in public areas. Visit their [website](#) to see the images.

#### ► **France: Homeless and poorly housed people to have better access to the national ombudsman** [02/02/2010]

The French national ombudsman (and its 280 local and regional delegations), responsible for resolving disputes between citizens and the administration, will now work directly with organisations that assist homeless or inadequately housed people, in order better to secure their rights. State secretary for housing, Benoist Apparu, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the national ombudsman to secure such co-operation. The aim is to remove obstacles to effective access to basic rights such as care, housing rights, social benefits.

---

► **Ireland: Migrants from new EU states 'denied welfare'** [02/02/2010]

Increasing numbers of migrant workers from new EU states are being unfairly denied access to social welfare payments because residency rules are applied inconsistently, says Dublin-based organisation Crosscare's Housing, Welfare Information service (CHWI). CHWI reports that a significant number of migrant workers from the EEA (European Economic Area) who have lost their jobs face homelessness or leave the country as a result of decisions made by community welfare officers to refuse them supplementary welfare allowance, a €196 weekly social welfare payment to help people meet basic needs. "We see a lack of understanding of the legal entitlements of EEA migrant workers amongst community welfare officers. We believe that there is a significant knowledge gap there," said Wayne Stanley (CHWI Policy Officer). This warning comes as new figures showed the Government spent €151,863 on flights to repatriate 663 EU nationals who became destitute last year.

A Department of Social Welfare spokeswoman said the aim of the "habitual residency" requirement was to protect the Irish welfare system from abuses. She added that anyone dissatisfied with a decision could request a review. In 2009 the Irish state repatriated 14 Bulgarians, 33 Czechs, five Estonians, nine Hungarians, 52 Latvians, 16 Lithuanians, 93 Poles, 394 Romanians and 47 Slovaks.

---

► **Italy: Reports of growing demand for homeless services** [02/02/2010]

NGOs have reported growing demand for homeless services in Italian cities, especially amongst the elderly. There are growing numbers of elderly people who cannot make ends meet and who are coming into contact with homeless services. Some of these may be people with social housing but who are unable to cover the costs of medication or heating. The chairman of Fiopds, Paolo Pezzana reports that "there are people whom we never thought we'd never see." There are also growing requests for support from single parents.

In Italy the results are currently awaited of a national homelessness survey which has been carried out by the Welfare Ministry, ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics), Fiopds and Caritas Italiana. These results will provide stronger statistical insight into the extent of homelessness.

---

## Announcements

► **Eurostat news release on living conditions in Europe** [02/02/2010]

On the 18 January 2010, in line with the beginning of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) issued a news release summarising comparative statistics on income distribution and social exclusion. The release announced that in 2008, 17% of the population in the EU27 were at risk of poverty. This means that their income after social transfers was below the poverty threshold (set at 60% of the national median income). The news release also presents figures on material deprivation rates, which describe social exclusion in more absolute terms. See the [press release](#) for further information.

---

## Publications

► **UK: 'The impact of devolution: Housing and homelessness'** [02/02/2010]

This new report examines the post-devolution differences in housing policy in the four countries of the UK, and the impact these have had on low-income households. The report finds that 'The analysis ...suggests the ideal homelessness system would combine the vigour of the English and Welsh preventative measures with the strong statutory safety net available in Scotland'. Download the report [here](#).

---

► **US: National Alliance to End Homelessness toolkit 'Organizational change: adopting a housing first approach.'** [02/02/2010]

This tool-kit explains how to shift away from shelter and transitional housing strategies and towards prevention and Housing First approaches. The Housing First approach encompasses a diverse range of programs that are guided by a number of principles that can be implemented into successful programs. Download the toolkit [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)

**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.**