

Right to housing: FEANTSA v. France

Hearing in Strasbourg today

In November 2006 FEANTSA lodged a collective complaint against France for non compliance with Article 31 of the revised European Social Charter, which is devoted to the right to housing. After declaring the complaint admissible, the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe decided to organise a hearing in this context.

Access to decent housing is a precondition for the exercise of other fundamental rights and for full participation in society. Housing rights are enshrined in widely ratified international instruments, including the revised European Social Charter, and in several EU Member States national laws. However, their concrete implementation remains unsatisfactory in many countries. In order to improve the effective enforcement of the social rights guaranteed by the Charter, an Additional protocol providing for a mechanism of collective complaints has been ratified. It foresees the participation of non State actors, including international non-governmental organisations. What is unique about this mechanism is that it allows not only to challenge a piece of legislation, but to question the totality of a government policy in a particular field.

At a moment when access to housing becomes more difficult for an increasing number of households and the debate on the justiciable right to housing arises in several European countries, FEANTSA felt that the time had come to strengthen and complement its advocacy for housing rights by using the collective complaint mechanism.

On average, in the last thirty years, the quality of housing and the housing situation of the majority of the population have improved in France, which has also adopted a number of ambitious housing laws and policies. However, the reality shows that despite these measures, France fails in effectively implementing the right to housing for all, and in particular in meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable.

FEANTSA and its French members gathered evidence of their allegations and concerns. They reviewed in detail the state of play in France in terms of international obligations, internal legislation, existing public policies and facts from both official and independent sources.

FEANTSA welcomes today's hearing. It will allow the European Committee of Social Rights to review the arguments presented both by FEANTSA and the French Government.

FEANTSA and its French members hope that the conclusions of the Committee, which will be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers and to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in the coming months, will be a driver for change not only in France, but across Europe.

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FEANTSA

Organisations supporting the collective complaint

FEANTSA French member organisations :



Organisations supporting our initiative:

CENTRE ON
HOUSING RIGHTS
AND EVICTIONS

