

**The Perspective of Organisations working
with the homeless on the implementation
of social inclusion policies
under the EU social inclusion strategy**

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FEANTSA

**European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
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1. Introduction

1.1 EU CONTEXT

In the framework of the EU Social Inclusion Strategy, the Member States have been asked to report on the implementation of their NAPsIncl 2003-2005 (for EU15 Member States) and NAPsIncl 2004-2006 (for EU10 Member States).¹ These Reports must assess the impact of the NAPsIncl on poverty and social exclusion at national, regional and local level, thereby highlighting the successes and failures of social inclusion policies until now.

This is a compulsory exercise for EU15 who have been asked to submit an *Implementation report* (although Italy has not submitted a report yet), and is optional for EU10 who have been invited to submit an *Update*.²

FEANTSA, representing homeless service providers in Europe and namely within the EU social inclusion process, decided to produce a *Shadow European Implementation Report* to provide a homeless service providers perspective on the

implementation of social inclusion policies under the EU social inclusion strategy during the first phase of the process (2001-2005).³ Social inclusion indeed covers a wide range of societal problems which require effective monitoring and solutions - and homelessness is one of these.

This specific analysis is based on the feedback of FEANTSA members on ten main elements of homeless policy⁴ which have emerged from the different national reports on national social inclusion policies between 2001 and 2005. The national reports examined include NAPsIncl 2001-2003, NAPsIncl 2003-2005, EU15 Updates, EU15 Implementation Reports (all countries except for Italy), and EU10 Updates (for Hungary, Malta, Cyprus). The analysis encompasses all 4 categories of homelessness as outlined in ETHOS - European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion (see FEANTSA website for more information):

1 The NAP reporting of all 25 EU Member States will be synchronised by 2006 with the launch of the Streamlined strategy on social inclusion and social protection

2 All reports are available on the [European Commission website](#)

3 This report is to be adopted by the Administrative Council of FEANTSA on 26 October 2005.

4 See questionnaire in Appendix



Table ETHOS 2006 - European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion					
Conceptual Category		Operational Category		Generic Definition	National Sub-Categories
ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Rough Sleeping (no access to 24-hour accommodation) / No abode	
	2	People staying in a night shelter	2.1	Overnight shelter	
HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1	Homeless hostel	
			3.2	Temporary Accommodation	
	4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation / reception centres (asylum)	
			5.2	Migrant workers accommodation	
	6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions	
6.2			Medical institutions		
7	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for homeless people		
		7.2	Supported accommodation		
		7.3	Transitional accommodation with support		
		7.4	Accommodation with support		
INSECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1	Temporarily with family/friends	
			8.2	No legal (sub)tenancy	
			8.3	Illegal occupation of building	
8.4			Illegal occupation of land		
9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1	Legal orders enforced (rented)		
		9.2	Re-possession orders (owned)		
10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents of domestic violence		
INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-standard structures	11.1	Mobile home / caravan	
			11.2	Non-standard building	
			11.3	Temporary structure	
12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Unfit for habitation (under national legislation; occupied)		
13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding		

1.2 PROGRESS OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE EU SOCIAL INCLUSION PROCESS

There has been a clear change in the importance attached to homelessness and housing in the different EU Member States as indicated in the evaluation reports produced by the European Commission over the past 5 years: from homelessness and housing as urgent policy issues for *some* Member States (1st Joint Inclusion Report [2001](#)), for *most* Member States (2nd Joint Inclusion report [2004](#)), for *all* new Member States (Report on NAPsIncl of new Member States [2005](#)), to homelessness as one of the 6 key priorities for all 25 Member States (1st Joint Report Social Protection & Social Inclusion [2005](#)).

In the *1st Joint Inclusion Report 2001*, the European Commission concludes that there is clear recognition of the phenomenon of homelessness in the NAPsIncl, however there is still no clear understanding of the phenomenon: “Most Member States admit that they **know (too) little** about both the magnitude and the nature of the problem, which also **prevents** them from developing more **strategic and preventive measures** against homelessness.”

In the *2nd Joint Inclusion Report 2004*, there is recognition of the severity of the problem: “Being ‘homeless’...is probably the most extreme form of social exclusion and poverty in Europe”. There is also the first assessment of the evolution of the scope of homelessness: “...in terms of accommodation there are indications that housing waiting lists have grown and there is a **tendency for homelessness to increase**.” Finally, there is first mention of the need to target homeless people when developing policies to tackle social exclusion: “The new NAPs outline has contributed to a thorough reflection on **priority groups such as the homeless**, children in care, victims of human trafficking, illiterate persons and other very vulnerable groups.” The Report calls for an “integrated and holistic approach” to tackle homelessness.

In the *Report on NAPsIncl of New Member States 2005*, homelessness becomes a **key priority** for the first time: “Improving access to decent housing and tackle homelessness” is considered one of the key challenges for the future NAPsIncl. Moreover, it is clear that most New member states have more narrow definitions of homelessness (“the term ‘homeless’ is used in reference only to people living on the street, i.e. ‘without a roof over their heads’”), than the EU15 countries definitions of homelessness “which relate more generally **to all situations of ‘homelessness’** and take account of the different degrees to which people are deprived of decent and salubrious housing.”

The *Joint Report Social Protection & Social Inclusion 2005* states that several Member States are starting to develop more integrated approaches to tackling homelessness. Moreover, this Report confirms that homelessness is a priority for all 25 EU Member States: “The work undertaken to date confirms the **relevance of several key policy priorities**. Focusing on these will help to address some of the **most pressing issues** like preventing child poverty, supporting the caring capacity of families, addressing gender inequalities, **tackling homelessness** and opening new routes to integration of ethnic minorities and migrants.”

The increased importance attached to homelessness under the EU social inclusion strategy is finally confirmed by the EPSCO Council⁵ March 2005. In the conclusions of the Council meeting, all EU25 Employment and Social Affairs Ministers agreed that “treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness” is one of the key social inclusion priorities for the future (see press release [here](#)). FEANTSA has responded to this by launching a European alliance to end homelessness which should be fully functioning by 2010.⁶

5 The Employment and Social Affairs Ministers of EU25 convened on 3 and 4 March 2005 to discuss, *inter alia*, the future social inclusion priorities for the European Union.

6 See [report](#) of the launching seminar in the European Parliament.

1.3 FINDINGS

In spite of the scope and the gravity of the problem of homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe, (integrated) public policies addressing homelessness and improved access to housing are still relatively rare and new. In all EU member states public homeless and housing policies are still being further developed - in some countries with more success than in others. The fact that most member states are eager to find better and more effective ways of combating homelessness and housing exclusion provides ample opportunities for mutual learning. All EU member states - even those with apparently better policies addressing homelessness - still have an important homeless population.

Countries have proposed different forms of action in their national reports according to the profiles and needs of the homeless populations in their respective national contexts. Progress in implementing policies to end homelessness has therefore been made in different areas and at different paces. The actions and policies addressing homelessness of the Member States over the past few years, parts of which are outlined in the NAPs Incl, Updates, Implementation Reports, can be broken down into **10 main areas**:

EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

- > Monitoring and documentation
- > Research and analysis
- > Regular revision of policies

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

- > Emergency relief
- > Integration
- > Prevention

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

- > Integrate housing, health, employment, education & training
- > Interagency working
- > Interdepartmental working

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

- > Focus on enforceable right to housing

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

- > Involvement of all stakeholders including NGOs and public authorities
- > Make all stakeholders responsible for implementing policy
- > Participation of people experiencing homelessness

STATUTORY APPROACH

- > Legal framework at national level/regional level
- > Statutory aims and objectives

SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

- > Adequate funding
- > Political commitment
- > Public support

NEEDS-BASED APPROACH

- > Needs of individual are start of policy development

PRAGMATIC APPROACH

- > Realistic and achievable objectives
- > Clear and realistic time schedule

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

- > Importance of local authorities
- > Service delivery close to the homeless

The country initiatives outlined in the next Chapter are used to illustrate these 10 general approaches taken in EU countries, and can be compared. However, the aim here is not to consider which countries are making more progress than others since they are all advancing at different paces and are at different stages in their policy development, in accordance with their national context.

2. Ten approaches to tackling homelessness

2.1 EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

A good understanding of the problem of homelessness is the key to developing effective policies to tackle homelessness. This can be developed through monitoring and documentation of trends in homelessness and numbers of homeless people, consequent development of appropriate indicators, and should ideally be complemented by regular research and analysis on the causes and consequences of homelessness. A sound understanding of homelessness will also allow for better revision of policies where necessary.

This approach is promoted by FEANTSA (see [Research Observatory](#) and [Data Collection](#) working group), by the European Commission (see [Strand 1](#) of the Community Action Programme to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion), and by the Social Protection Committee (see *Report on Indicators in the field of poverty and social exclusion 2001* [here](#)) which agreed that “NAPsIncl should contain quantitative information covering three issues: (1) decent housing, (2) housing costs, (3) homelessness and other precarious housing conditions.”

Collecting data through documentation systems is useful for monitoring trends in homelessness and profiles of homeless people in order to develop appropriate policies to tackle homelessness, but also to improve homeless services so that the main beneficiaries of any documentation system are always **the service users themselves**. Regarding people under the “roofless” category of ETHOS (non-service users), many countries have carried out ad-hoc surveys on the number of rough sleepers at a given point in time, and often in specific cities rather than at national level. Regarding the “houseless” category of ETHOS (mostly homeless service users), there are some national or regional documentation systems managed by homeless service providers which provide user data and needs data. Regarding the insecure housing category and the inadequate housing category, most countries do have data (namely on evictions, victims of domestic violence forced into shelters, unfit housing, overcrowding), however very few of these data are actually used in the NAPsIncl or Implementation Reports, which makes it difficult to monitor progress of policies addressing these issues in the EU social inclusion process.

In Finland, efforts to monitor homelessness trends are clear and included in the Finnish Implementation Report - attempts to reduce the number of homeless have been successful, and the majority of homeless people are still single men.⁷ **In Spain**, according to the Homeless Survey performed by the INE, it is estimated that in 2003 there were between 16,000 and 21,500 homeless people. **In Belgium (Flanders)**, the Tel-lus system is developing and produced interesting data for 2004, namely on the number and profile of clients in the different housing services of the Flemish umbrella of welfare organizations. **In Ireland**, the Dublin-based LINK system has aimed since 2002 to improve services and service delivery to provide a continuum of care for homeless people. This is a system managed, maintained and monitored by the Homeless Agency (coordinating body for funding and service delivery in the Greater Dublin area). In addition, an IT system is being developed for local authorities to help them carry out their housing functions. **In Sweden**, the National Board of Health and Welfare has developed a standardized model for local homelessness surveys within the framework of the abovementioned assignment. The Board will proceed with its development efforts until the end of 2007. This assignment includes a national survey of homelessness in 2005 and thereafter every two years. **In the Netherlands**, there is a National Monitor on Homelessness which carries out annual research effort to monitor developments on clients, service providers and local authorities. However, the approach is ad-hoc, thematic and very much dependent on the political context - which does not necessarily give a clear picture of ongoing and long-term trends.

7 See Figure 13 (p.11) Trends in the number of homeless http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2005/fin_en.pdf

Research and analysis has been systematically carried out in a number of countries, but is fairly new in other countries. **In Portugal**, a study has just been undertaken (2005) by the Institute for Social Security of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, on Homelessness Services in Portugal. Moreover, there will be a survey of rough sleepers in the whole country on 19 October (from 7pm to 3 am) in cooperation with homeless service providers. **In Poland**, the University of Gdansk and Pomeranian Forum in Aid of Getting Out of Homelessness are currently working on a project (funded by Equal) to set up a “Section of studies, analyzes and standardization” within a joint homelessness data collection strategy at regional level in the Pomeranian region. This will include research on trends in homelessness, profile of homeless people, and homeless service evaluations. **In Luxembourg**, the Government has commissioned a quantitative study on the phenomenon of homelessness in the country (launched this year), as well as a longitudinal study on the evolutions of the housing stock in Luxembourg, both to be carried out by the CEPS Institute. **In Greece**, the homeless service provider Klimaka conducted a survey in 2002 on mental illness and homeless people, and is currently carrying out a survey on “Homelessness in Greece: socio-psychological profile and living conditions in the streets of Athens and three other big Greek cities”. For more on this study (aims, methodology, etc), see supporting powerpoint presentation ([here](#))

In countries where this evidence-based approach is slightly more developed, the research and monitoring is used for regular revision of policies based on quantitative or qualitative data collected. **In the UK (Scotland)**, the Homelessness Monitoring Group chases progress and monitors problems which may be arising and seeks to respond to them, however the overall policy does not change. **In Ireland**, consultants are engaged to undertake a review of the implementation of the Government’s homeless strategy and to make recommendations to promote further progress in addressing homelessness. **In the Netherlands**, there is a yearly progress report to the Parliament on all issues concerning homelessness and domestic violence.

Conclusions: The trends in most countries consist of three main elements:

- > Monitoring and documentation
- > Research and analysis
- > Regular revision of policies

On the whole, there is progress towards a more and systematic research and monitoring of the phenomenon of homelessness, mainly as a means of monitoring trends in homelessness rather than numbers of homeless. There have been efforts to measure the number of rough sleepers, as well as the number of people who access statutory homeless services. However, very few countries have official figures on the number of homeless, and even fewer have a clear definition of homelessness.⁸ A number of countries which already have fairly integrated homeless policies, were using this approach even before the start of the EU social inclusion process. However, other countries with more embryonic homeless policies have increased their research and monitoring capacities (either at national or regional level) to better understand the phenomenon.⁹

8 FEANTSA is working on this through its Observatory and its Data Collection working group by refining ETHOS, and has proposed guidelines for setting up documentation systems

9 For information on methodologies for appropriate collection of stock, flow or prevalence data, see FEANTSA Research Observatory publications on Review of homeless statistics in the European Union ([here](#))

2.3 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

Homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem - this is acknowledged in most if not all country reports on social inclusion. The routes in and out of homelessness can be very diverse and often related to housing, (mental) health, employment, education, discrimination, and often a combination of these areas. It is therefore crucial for countries to work on all fronts. **The Czech Republic** launched a 2-year "Strategy of social inclusion of homeless" which is a clear and integrated strategy including actions on most issues related to homelessness (namely health care for the homeless, housing and labour market integration), although there will not yet be any systematic data collection on these different aspects of the strategy. **In the UK** (Scotland), there is good integration of health services and housing services in most areas, as health and homelessness action plans are integrated in local authority homelessness strategies. Like in England, the employment and education&training services are less well integrated. In Wales, the community strategies include elements like sustainability, inclusion, cohesive communities, improving health, education and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, however there is little emphasis on linking housing and the tackling of homelessness to these elements. **In Germany**, there are around 40-50 specialized services which offer on-street medical care for ill homeless people in the streets. They drive - partly with busses (around ten services), which offer facilities for medical emergency care or they lead specified facilities for the medical care of homeless people. The task of these services is the re-integration of the extremely excluded into the structures of normal health care. **In Malta**, a new homeless shelter was opened in January 2005 - a Harm reduction shelter - aimed at helping homeless people with drug-related problems, which is an indication that measures are being taken to tackle homelessness from a health perspective (and not only housing).

Interagency working is also part of an effective multi-dimensional approach. It is clear that the 'homeless sector' cannot address all these problems by itself. Co-operation with other sectors and other actors is a vital component of every effective strategy against homelessness. **In Portugal**, the city of Lisbon launched an integrated plan in 2002 (Plano Lx) to reintegrate homeless people and people with drug/alcohol addictions. It aims to strengthen networking between voluntary and statutory actors in the field of homelessness to better divide tasks and responsibilities, as well as promoting cooperation through exchange of experiences. **In the Netherlands**, policy development on homelessness and domestic violence is currently very much debated. One of the results of these debates is the effect on other parties such as housing corporations and health care providers which are starting to recognize increasingly that these target groups are their responsibility as well. **In France**, the free phone-line 115 is used to promote and consolidate synergies between different actors in one same region, and networking between different actors involved in the emergency services has been reinforced by the overarching national Social Cohesion Plan (adopted in June 2004) as well as the Law on social cohesion adopted in January 2005. **In Austria**, there is visible interagency working, but this is only restricted to specific parts of the social system and mainly in the framework of transnational projects such as under the EQUAL programme.

Interdepartmental working between relevant housing, employment and health ministries is also crucial for developing effective strategies to tackle homelessness, and to avoid negative repercussions of policies developed in different fields. There is a general trend towards more joined-up government. **In the Netherlands**, since the Interdepartmental Policy Survey there is a marked improvement in the cooperation between the relevant ministries. However, new laws from the different ministries tend not to be screened on counterproductive elements for the vulnerable target group.



2.4 RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

In Finland, there have been programmes for reducing homelessness financed between 2002 - 2005 from the funds of the Housing Fund and the Slot Machine Association. These programmes will continue up to 2007 in co-operation with the Greater Helsinki local authorities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of the Environment, the Slot Machine Association, the Housing Fund and social service providers and NGOs. **In the UK** (England), a Ministerial committee was set up under the Rough Sleepers Strategy 1999-2002 and headed by Minister for Local Government and Housing and composed of representatives from the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Employment, the Department of Social Security, the Ministry of Defence, and HM Treasury. Its responsibility was to track the action and achievements of Government and the progress towards the targets of the strategy (reducing the rough sleeping population in England by 2/3rds).

Conclusions: It seems clear that the general trend is to tackle homelessness in an integrated way, through:

- > Integrating housing, health, employment, education & training aspects
- > Interagency working (voluntary agencies, local authorities, health authorities, prison authorities, housing organizations, etc)
- > Interdepartmental working (inter-ministerial cooperation and joined-up government)

Housing and health are increasingly integrated into homelessness strategies, however employment and education & training are yet to be reinforced in any homeless strategy. Regarding interagency working and interdepartmental working, there is a general understanding that such cooperation is the only way to tackle a multi-dimensional problem like homelessness, and countries use different methods to consolidate cooperation (phonelines, nationally coordinated strategies, local or regional platforms, etc).

A number of homeless service providers in Europe have started working on fighting homelessness from a rights-based approach. Many of our member organisations have been advocating for housing rights for long time given that adequate housing and reasonable living conditions are among the most basic needs of each individual. The right to privacy, to personal dignity, to lifelong education, to maternity care, to social protection, to health care, to work, to vote, and all other similar socio-economic, civil and political rights are all devoid of meaning for people who have lost their homes. The access to decent, stable housing is frequently also the indispensable precondition for the exercise of most of the other fundamental rights.

Most EU countries have signed international treaties which include housing rights, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, and which refers specifically to the right to housing (art. 11). At the level of the Council of Europe, the revised Social Charter of 1996 places an obligation on signatory States to guarantee the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion (art. 30), and to ensure the effective exercise of the right to housing (art. 31).

In France, the right to housing is being reinforced through improved regional plans on access to housing for vulnerable groups which cover prevention of evictions, reducing precarious housing, simplifying access to social rental housing, and strengthening the mediating committees to allow for appeals (since the right to housing is now justiciable in France). **In Scotland**, every homeless household will be entitled to a house by 2012, and the right to housing is justiciable. So the intention is to enforce the right to housing, although the intention is also to create a new culture where prevention and seeking to solve problems are at the heart of the system, so that enforcing rights should be the last resort.

Conclusions: Very few countries have a rights-based approach to homelessness, and even fewer have a legal framework providing an enforceable right to housing for homeless people. Nevertheless, a few countries are increasingly focusing on the enforceable right to housing. Access to rights is among the common objectives of the EU social inclusion strategy (“to facilitate participation in employment and access by all to the resources, **rights**, goods and services”). However, the rights aspect of social inclusion has clearly been neglected in the social inclusion process up until now, and would need strengthening within the new streamlined strategy.¹¹

¹¹ In this respect, FEANTSA will co-organise a conference on housing rights with the Finnish Presidency in the second half of 2006.

2.5 PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

A participatory approach is crucial for any homeless strategy to work. This entails participation of all stakeholders in policy development, policy implementation (where appropriate), and policy evaluation; including people experiencing homelessness at organizational level (in the services) or at policy-making level. **In Portugal**, there has been good cooperation between public authorities and homeless service providers in the preparation of a questionnaire for the upcoming survey on rough sleepers in Portugal. Homeless service providers were consulted for the preparation of the questionnaire, and will also assist in the implementation of the initiative. **In Romania**, there has been much progress on homeless policies and monitoring of homelessness trends, namely through regular consultations and involvement of homeless service providers in policy development. **In the Czech Republic**, the umbrella organizations of homeless service providers have worked closely with the Ministry of social affairs. One of the main umbrella organizations, S.A.D., is leading and implementing the 2-year strategy of social inclusion of homeless people.

As regards the participation of people experiencing homelessness, most countries have been involving service users (or 'clients') at various levels.¹² The Netherlands and Denmark have involved service users in policy-making. **In the Netherlands**, there is a statutory obligation to promote participation through client councils in each organization (although no real efforts have been made to improve this lately). **In Denmark**, the national Council for Socially Marginalised People plays a key role as consultative body informing policy development. Moreover, the EU peer review on policies for homeless people enjoyed the participation of the user organisation SAND - an association of homeless people.¹³ New user organisations have also recently come into being, for example SVID, an association of shelter users. **In Austria**, there is general participation of stakeholders and of people experiencing homelessness, but this is exclusively at regional or local level, and never at Federal level. **In Luxembourg**, a steering committee has been set up to monitor progress of the future quantitative study to be carried out by CEPS (beginning 2006). This Committee is composed of researchers from CEPS, representatives from homeless service providers, as well as one representative from the Ministry for Family Affairs.

Conclusions: A participatory approach to tackling homelessness is clearly present in most country reports in the social inclusion process (in line with the fourth Common objective on "mobilization of all stakeholders", and entails participation in the following ways:

- > Involvement of all stakeholders including NGOs and public authorities
- > Make all stakeholders responsible for implementing policy
- > Participation of people experiencing homelessness

Homelessness is a field where cooperation with service providers is crucial, especially in addressing problems of rooflessness, since service providers know how to reach roofless people with a tendency to "avoid" services. Policies to tackle homelessness would most probably be more effective with closer cooperation with/ and use of the resources (data, experience) of service providers for the development and implementation of policies. Consultation of service users is also useful to a certain extent when carried out in appropriate structures, and this is indeed the trend in an increasing number of countries, even if it is perhaps too early at this stage to say that development of public services is a democratic process (if that is indeed the aim). However, there is very little mention of this in the national social inclusion reports under the EU social inclusion strategy which complicates the monitoring of such participation in line with the EU common objective on social inclusion.

2.6 STATUTORY APPROACH

A homeless strategy supported by a clear legal framework at national level or regional level allows for consistency and accountability in implementation of homeless policies. Statutory aims and objectives can also complement such homeless strategy and place pressure to achieve concrete results. This was the case **in the UK** (England) where the Rough Sleepers Strategy 1999-2002 was underwritten by primary legislation. The Homelessness Act was then passed in 2002 - a major piece of legislation placing an obligation on local authorities to devise homelessness strategies, and enforcing

¹² See upcoming Participation Report on www.feantsa.org

¹³ See EU peer review [website](#)

a statutory obligation for local authorities to provide accommodation to homeless people in priority need. There are therefore some “Statutory Homeless” with priority needs, and the state is obliged to provide for this group (although, this is problematic for the non-statutory homeless who still need support, but do not necessarily receive it in time). **In Denmark**, the administrative structures of the country will be reformed and come into force in 2007 (271 municipalities will merge into about 100, and 14 counties will be replaced by 5 regions) whereby responsibility for homeless services will be moved from the county level to municipal level, providing a clear structure for local authorities to develop homeless policies. **In Luxembourg**, the Government is preparing a legislative reform on the organisation of social assistance at local level. The aim is to establish regional structures (rather than the current local structures) and to provide enough staff and funding necessary for effective homeless services. **In the Netherlands** the future Social Support Act (to be implemented beginning of 2006 or 2007) is expected to strengthen the implementation of policies at local level, and will oblige local authorities and health authorities to work together to provide a chain of services for homeless people with addiction/mental health problems or victims of domestic violence. **In the UK** (Scotland), there are a series of interlinking statutory requirements underpinning the legal homelessness framework, including inspection of local authority homeless functions and publication of the results of inspections. In Wales, local homelessness strategies and the national homelessness strategy have targets to meet during their lifetimes e.g. to reduce rough sleeping by 20% from 06/07 to 2010, reduce repeat homelessness by 20% from 06/07 to 2010. This not only places pressure on public authorities to achieve visible results, but it also helps to ensure that data is collected on the given areas with targets. **In Austria**, in the region of Upper Austria, a law will be passed on homelessness including elements of prevention based on the prevention of homelessness model developed in the city of Vienna. **In France**, the Law on social cohesion adopted on 18 January 2005 (mentioned under 2.3 above) provides a clear framework for preventing and tackling homelessness.

Conclusions: Certain countries do use the statutory approach to combating homelessness, although this is still relatively new, and mainly involves:

- > Legal framework at national level/regional level
- > Statutory aims and objectives

It is clear that these provide a clear framework for evaluation and revision of policies, monitoring of service quality, effective interagency and interdepartmental cooperation. However, the use of statutory measures generally varies according to the administrative structures of the countries (Federal, centralized, confederal, etc). On the whole, the use of targets produces a strong political imperative to show success (see 2.9 Pragmatic approach).

2.7 SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Adequate funding and political commitment are crucial for any long-term strategy to tackle and end homelessness. Such financial and political support should ideally be backed by support from the general public, namely through information and awareness campaigns. **In the Czech Republic**, there is increased political support and funding through the recently launched 2-year strategy on social inclusion of homeless people, a strategy which will also include awareness-raising aimed at the general public (how to help a homeless person, changing stereotypes of homelessness). Despite this clear political support for a national level strategy, there is a recent trend towards cutting funding for homeless service providers at regional level which does not reflect the commitment at national level. **In the UK** (England), there is a political commitment to provide social housing and such services are reasonably well funded. However, the secure funding is mainly for housing-based services - as regards education and employment services related to homelessness the funding streams are not adequate or sustainable. **In the Netherlands**, the users of shelters have gained the right to long term (mental) health care within the shelter system, and the budget consequently increased from 225 million euro in 2002 to more than 300 million euros in 2005. On the whole, all parties are committed to continue the funding for shelters, housing projects and to projects to prevent domestic violence. **In Denmark**, the Danish parliament and the Government, as well as the general public, actively support policies to tackle homelessness. However, the reasons behind this support vary from need for solidarity and access to fundamental rights, to “cleaning” the streets to make the phenomenon less visible.

In terms of public support, **in the UK** (Scotland) a working group of the Homelessness Monitoring Group has been set up to deal with public awareness issues. This is a major issue which has to be tackled carefully. **In the Netherlands**, there is a public shift from tolerance to more strict rules for people who cause feelings of insecurity in the streets or who cause problems in the public domain. This shift in opinion threatens the public acceptance of services for homeless people.

Conclusions: The sustainable approach to tackling homelessness in the national reports under the EU social inclusion strategy consists of three main elements:

- > Adequate funding
- > Political commitment
- > Public support

Very few countries benefit from all three and are working on improving different aspects. The funding is consistent for some countries, but not all. Political commitment at one level does not necessarily reflect political commitment or funding at other levels of policy-making - in some cases, there is national commitment but less regional commitment, and vice versa. It is important in this respect, to evaluate regularly and quantify the gaps which need to be filled. In other countries, there is more work on raising awareness of the general public as a means of securing the political commitment and sufficient funding to develop an integrated strategy to tackle homelessness. More research is required on public perception of homelessness in EU25 (perception of general public, perception of policy-makers, perception of service providers, etc). Such a sustainable approach should also strengthen attempts to find sustainable solutions which should be based around assessing the individual needs of each applicant and finding a solution for their particular needs.

2.8 NEEDS-BASED APPROACH

The needs-based approach is a principle. It is different to the more common “structures-based” approach where policy is developed on the basis of structures in place which are not necessarily best equipped to address changing needs. Before developing policies to tackle homelessness, it is crucial to carry out research/surveys on the needs of homeless people - this includes housing needs, health needs, and employment needs, legal needs, etc. This sort of data should ideally be integrated in any monitoring system so that any homeless person applying for help should be encouraged to provide this kind of information (personal data *and* support needs data) to the extent that this will benefit the service user. **In Ireland**, there is a triennial national housing needs survey which assesses the housing needs of households in order to deliver an appropriate mix of social and affordable housing measures. Local authorities are required in their housing strategies to address the housing needs of all sectors of the existing and future population in their area. The housing needs of Travellers have been addressed recently, particularly those living on unauthorized sites. **In the Netherlands**, access to health care for example requires service providers to make individual assessments of the client’s needs, and thereby agree on the type of care and services and the amount of care they should receive. **In Luxembourg**, the national project *Jugendwunnen* was set up in response to service provider reports on the need to address emerging needs of youths forced to leave home before finishing their secondary or professional education. **In the UK** (Scotland), many local authorities are developing a ‘single shared assessment’ of needs - bringing together housing, health, social support and other needs in a single process.

Conclusions: The needs-based approach is developing, but still much progress is to be made in this area to ensure that the needs of the individual are the start of policy development. Policies should be developed according to existing *needs* rather than existing *structures*. Needs surveys should ideally be carried out on a regular basis to allow for appropriate revision of homeless policies and structures where necessary.

2.9 PRAGMATIC APPROACH

This approach consists of realistic and achievable objectives, as well as a clear and realistic time schedule. Realistic and achievable objectives are generally more present in countries which have undertaken the necessary research to fully understand the nature and scope of homelessness, the needs of homeless people, the evolution of the housing market, labour market and all other related areas. **In France**, the national social cohesion plan sets out objectives related to social housing (aiming to build 500.000 new social housing units between 2005 and 2009), related to urban regeneration (to increase the stock of social rental housing by 250.000 units by 2011, as well as the renovation of 400.000 social housing units before 2011). There are also aims to reduce insecure and unfit housing. **In the UK**, the national reports on social inclusion indicate that there has been progress towards meeting the decent homes target (now 200.000 fewer non-decent social sector dwellings than in 2001) which consists of making all social sector homes decent by 2010. There are also similar targets for housing in the private sector. There are also figures on the reduction of rough sleeping since 1998 (by 70%), as well as the aims of reducing homelessness and halve the number of households in insecure temporary accommodation by 2010. In Scotland, the Scottish executive has set out to ensure permanent accommodation for all unintentionally homeless people by 2012, and will be taking up the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force (amending legislation, preventing homelessness, improving health and employment services) to ensure that the homeless policies allow for progress towards the target.

Conclusions: A pragmatic approach would consist of the two following elements:

- > Realistic and achievable objectives
- > Clear and realistic time schedule

Such objectives sometimes exist at national level, but are very rare in the national reports submitted under the EU social inclusion strategy, yet are crucial in terms of measuring progress in areas such as homelessness under the EU social inclusion strategy. Few countries have figures or objectives on the insecure and inadequate housing dimensions of homelessness, and even fewer have objectives concerning the roofless or houseless population. Figures on housing renovation and construction are useful, but more figures are needed on health and resettlement in order to monitor paths followed by rough sleepers once off the street. Objectives, targets and realistic time schedules generally exist where appropriate research is available on the profile, the needs, the numbers of homeless people, as well as the capacities of service providers, local authorities to implement adequate policies to tackle homelessness. Long-term targets are more frequent given the need to assess the situation and develop new models of support where necessary.

2.10 BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

It is clear from the national reports on social inclusion, that policy responses to homelessness are increasingly developed through a bottom-up approach, namely by local authorities (rather than national authorities). Moreover, this shift is considered positive given that homelessness is perceived as requiring a local solution, given that local authorities are in a strong position to coordinate partnerships between all relevant actors in the fight to end homelessness - homeless service providers, housing associations, health authorities, prison boards, and many others.¹⁴ In Ireland, a new framework of five-year action plans for local authority social and affordable housing programmes has been introduced to cover the period 2004-2008. The action plans encompass the provision of social rented accommodation by the local authority, the voluntary and cooperative housing sector, Traveller accommodation, measures to address homelessness as well as affordable housing and programmes to regenerate the existing local authority stock. In Latvia, local authorities have an obligation to provide shelter for homeless people and the growing numbers of homeless people in Riga have meant that the local authority in Riga has had to critically assess the situation and develop policies to improve the situation. In the UK (Wales) local authorities have the local responsibility for developing homelessness strategies and preventing homelessness. They and their partners have a responsibility (and LA's have a duty) to make their services accessible to homeless people. However, homelessness is not always considered as important in the corporate structure of the authority which leads to a lack of prioritisation and funding. In Scotland, there is both a top down and bottom up approach. There is a clear legal framework and monitoring arrangements imposed from the centre. Within that individual areas are encouraged to develop their own strategies relating to the specific needs of their area and the profile homeless people within that area. In Estonia, local authorities like Tallinn and Tartu have developed Welfare Action Plans (2006-2010) which outline measures supporting a wider range of preventive services for excluded groups and at-risk groups (such as homeless people). However, each local authority has different approaches to tackling homelessness since the problems vary from one area to the other: for example, the Northern part of Estonia has a lower unemployment rate than other parts, whereas the Eastern part of Estonia has higher unemployment rates combined with greater numbers of Aids victims. In Belgium (Flanders), actors in the homeless sector are developing a project to strengthen partnerships with local authorities. In Portugal, the city of Lisbon is a crucial player in bringing together all homeless services in Lisbon, namely

through the Plano Lx Programme which consists of a primary and secondary prevention programme, several street teams, as well as the main homeless hostels in Lisbon. In Luxembourg, the Ministry for Family Affairs has taken the initiative to discuss homelessness with local authorities (namely in the South of the country - Esch/Alzette, Dudelange, Differdange). However, the local authorities do not all agree on the need to prioritise homeless policies.

It is important to mention the need for a regional perspective, even when devolving power to the local level. In the UK (England), power has been devolved to local government but this causes some interesting problems in London where there are 33 units of Local Government all taking local responsibility with a local agenda, leading to a lack of Pan London co-ordination. In the Netherlands, the Government has shifted responsibility for emergency relief to the local authorities (under the future Social Support Act). Federatie Opvang (the national umbrella of homeless service providers) has services based in 43 different cities and therefore requires more of a regional approach. In some regions this is starting to develop, in other areas this is not the case.

Conclusions: A bottom-up approach to tackling homelessness through greater involvement of local authorities (and more binding duties on local authorities) is clearly an important trend emerging from the national social inclusion reports which reveals:

- > The importance of local authorities
 - > The importance of service delivery close to the homeless
- Housing and homelessness policies are increasingly implemented at local level (see also countries like Spain, Denmark, France, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy, etc) given the varying nature of homelessness within countries and the need for specifically *local* solutions. However, it seems that power is being devolved in some countries without a clear national or regional framework to work in. The success of a strategy to tackle homelessness will depend on effective cooperation between national and local level, to ensure continuity and equal provision of services across the country. With adequate funding guaranteed by a national framework, local authorities can take on leadership roles in implementing strategies to tackle homelessness.

¹⁴ See FEANTSA newsletter on Local authorities and the fight against homelessness - Summer 2005 ([here](#))

3. Recommendations for future action

3.1 RELEVANCE OF COUNTRY REPORTING AT EU LEVEL

Country reporting at EU level is generally a useful source of information for all stakeholders working in the field of social inclusion. The content of these reports is useful for peer review debates, European conferences, transnational exchanges within the European networks. Moreover, this regular reporting enables monitoring bodies like FEANTSA to evaluate progress of policies in Europe - as is the aim of this report regarding the evolution of homeless policies over the past years.

For the purpose of this analysis, all country reports available were used to examine the nature of homeless policies in the EU, and *specifically the different approaches used on a policy level*. The Implementation Reports were different to previous reports since their principal objective was to examine to what extent and at what paces social inclusion policies have developed since the launch of the EU social inclusion strategy. However, these reports could have contained far more information on homelessness initiatives taking place at national, regional and local level, together with more data for monitoring and research purposes. Some of the information on homelessness in Europe was indeed provided in the reports, but not all. The information in this FEANTSA Shadow Report was therefore complemented by the knowledge and expertise of FEANTSA members to provide a different perspective on homelessness developments in Europe.

Nevertheless, these country reports have clearly shown that member states are increasingly acknowledging that homelessness remains a challenge and requires urgent action. It is clear that this initial "awareness-raising" phase of the Social inclusion strategy has had an impact and culminated in the EPSCO Council decision of March 2005 on the need to treat homelessness. Now that homelessness is firmly on the EU agenda, it is time to start the implementation phase.

3.2 PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The report findings have revealed there are certain gaps in country reporting, and national homeless policies in general.

Need for an integrated approach

Countries are taking action in various forms, but not necessarily in an integrated way. ETHOS can provide a good basis for developing integrated policies. According to the European Observatory on homelessness, the ETHOS approach "confirms that homelessness is a process (rather than a static phenomenon) that affects many vulnerable households at different points in their lives. Furthermore, it confirms that homelessness is more than rough sleeping and hence it focuses attention upon the pathways into homelessness experienced by different types of vulnerable households."¹⁵ EU countries are increasingly aware of this.

Research and monitoring in the field of homelessness are clearly one of the more underdeveloped areas - the European Commission launched a call this year to remedy this problem.¹⁶ These are important to ensure better monitoring of progress in the future streamlined NAPs. Further research and monitoring in the area of prevention of homelessness is required - this is reflected by the lack of clear and targeted prevention policies in the country reports. Research on public awareness and public perception of homelessness is also crucial. A Eurobarometer survey on perception of homelessness in Europe would be necessary and timely given the increasing visibility of homeless policies.

Local authorities will be important actors in the future development of homeless policies. It will be crucial to fully involve them in the EU strategy to fully raise their awareness on initiatives happening in different European countries. In response to this need, FEANTSA will focus in 2006 on strengthening partnerships with local authorities as a first step in the building of a European alliance to end homelessness.

¹⁵ See 2003 Review of Homeless Statistics [here](#)

¹⁶ See [Call](#) on Measuring homelessness in the EU

3.3 TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS

Our analysis of homeless policies outlined in the national reports of the EU social inclusion strategy reveal a variety of approaches to combating homelessness. Most countries have adopted at least one of these 10 approaches, some countries are starting to examine the possibilities of different approaches. However on the whole, there is still much to be done in the area of homelessness, and the following 10 approaches could be useful as a reference for discussions on developing appropriate policies to tackle homelessness:

1. Evidence-based approach

- > Monitoring and documentation
- > Research and analysis
- > Regular revision of policies

2. Comprehensive approach

- > Emergency relief
- > Integration
- > Prevention

3. Multi-dimensional approach

- > Integrate housing, health, employment, education & training
- > Interagency working
- > Interdepartmental working

4. Rights-based approach

- > Focus on enforceable right to housing

5. Participatory approach

- > Involvement of all stakeholders including NGOs and public authorities
- > Make all stakeholders responsible for implementing policy
- > Participation of people experiencing homelessness

6. Statutory approach

- > Legal framework at national level/regional level
- > Statutory aims and objectives

7. Sustainable approach

- > Adequate funding
- > Political commitment
- > Public support

8. Needs-based approach

- > Needs of individual are start of policy development

9. Pragmatic approach

- > Realistic and achievable objectives
- > Clear and realistic time schedule

10. Bottom-up approach

- > Importance of local authorities
- > Service delivery close to the homeless

It is important to note that this list of 10 approaches is not meant as a single integrated set of approaches to be applied to all countries of the EU. Rather, these different approaches can be adapted to national contexts according to national priorities, scope and nature of homelessness, profiles of homeless people, and the needs of homeless people.

Ideally, all approaches need to be present in an effective strategy to tackle homelessness. However, as stated in the introduction, countries are at different stages in homeless policy development, and the different national contexts may require more emphasis on one approach than on others. Nevertheless, these 10 approaches should be considered when strategically developing any policy to tackle homelessness, and can be used as a checklist where necessary.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Context:

Tackling and preventing homelessness have emerged over the past few years as important elements of the NAPsIncl. There have been many complaints regarding the poor quality of some NAPsIncl, and the lack of implementation of policies outlined in the NAPsIncl. The national ministries have been asked therefore to produce an “Implementation report” to evaluate to what extent the policies in the NAPs have indeed been implemented.

This is therefore a unique opportunity for FEANTSA to comment on the implementation reports, providing a service providers perspective of the implementation of homeless policies on the ground.

Countries have taken different forms of action in their NAPsIncl according to the profiles and needs of the homeless populations in their respective national contexts. Progress in implementing policies to end homelessness has therefore been made in different areas and at different paces. The actions and policies of the Member States over the past few years, as outlined in the NAPsIncl, can be broken down into 10 main areas (see below).

Please let me know

- A. In which of the 10 areas your country has made progress (if any)
- B. If the Implementation Report of your country reflects the reality of developments on the ground in terms of homelessness

10 main areas of progress
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Research and analysis
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Monitoring/Documentation (definition, data collection, indicators)
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Networking
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Prevention of homelessness
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Outreach (emergency) services
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Multi-dimensional approach: housing/employment/health services
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Legal framework (national or international) for implementation of homeless policies
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Importance of fundamental rights (rights-based policies)
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Participation of people experiencing homelessness
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Effective leadership (political/financial commitment)

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