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## EUROPEAN CITIES CALLED ON TO SIGN THE HOMELESS BILL OF RIGHTS

The **Homeless Bill of Rights** is an initiative of **Housing Rights Watch** and **FEANTSA** to recognize and protect the rights of homeless people. In a climate where cities, regions and even some countries are using the criminal and administrative justice systems to minimise the visibility of people experiencing homelessness and punish those who engage in life-sustaining or natural human activities in public spaces, we are calling on European cities to adopt a rights-based approach to homelessness.

The Homeless Bill of Rights is a compilation of basic rights drawn from European and International human rights law. By endorsing it, cities will reaffirm their commitment to human rights, which should be their guide in tackling the root causes of poverty and homelessness.

We are currently witnessing a worrying increase in the criminalisation of homeless people across the EU. From the use of Public Space Protection Orders in the UK, a municipal ordinance punishing begging in Italy or the proposed ban on begging in Sweden, these practices are very much the wrong way to tackle homelessness.

“The EU can and should act to enforce the human rights of all EU citizens, including homeless people. Within the EU Urban Agenda, the Urban Poverty Partnership has identified homelessness as a priority issue and has called on cities to take human rights-based approaches to tackling urban poverty and homelessness in their draft Action Plan,” said FEANTSA Director, Freek Spinnewijn.

The New Urban Agenda, approved at the UN Habitat III Conference in November 2016, called for measures to “prevent and eliminate homelessness” and to “combat and eliminate its criminalisation.” FEANTSA is well positioned to monitor the EU’s delivery of these international commitments and we stand ready to collaborate with the European Commission, EU Member States and cities in making sure that the commitment to eliminate homelessness is matched in the EU Urban Agenda.

We encourage cities to translate and adapt the Bill to their own context and to build a participatory strategy at local level to involve all stakeholders before it is signed. So far, Barcelona, and four Slovene cities (Maribor, Slovenj gradec, Kranj, Murska Sobota) have signed the Bill, with other large European cities having initiated the process to sign it.

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The Homeless Bill of Rights will be launched today by FEANTSA and Housing Rights Watch at the Cities Forum in Rotterdam.

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Find out more from <http://www.feantsa.org/en> or call +32 (0)2 538 66 69

Notes for editors:

1. FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless. It is an umbrella of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe. It is the only major European network focusing exclusively on homelessness at European level.
2. Housing Rights Watch is a European network made up of interdisciplinary groups of associations, lawyers and academics from different countries who are committed to promoting the right to housing for all.