



# FEANTSA NEWS

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## New Communications Assistant

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Silvia Mir Benajiba is the new Communications and Information Assistant for FEANTSA/HABITACT. She will stay with us until July 2015. Silvia studied Journalism and Social & Cultural Anthropology at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) and at University Corvinus of Budapest (Hungary), as part of the Erasmus programme, where she also volunteered with homeless people. She has extensive experience in communication and she is professionally and personally involved in defending social services for the most vulnerable people, ensuring that their human rights are not violated. She has been working in the disability sector for several years, organising and supervising recreational activities and assisting people with disabilities. She also interned in Mölndal (Sweden) informing young people on international projects and raising awareness of these amongst young people, improving European awareness. Finally, she cooperated with Amnesty International Catalonia within the Communications department. Supporting FEANTSA and HABITACT will be a new experience that will surely help her to continue growing professionally. She will support the FEANTSA communications strategy (social media, website, news monitoring and more) and for HABITACT she will support network-building (linking up with local authorities across Europe about policy developments).

## Confronting Homelessness in the Framework of the European Semester 2014 - A FEANTSA Monitoring Report

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As policymakers at EU, national, regional and local level look to 2020 and beyond, FEANTSA has [taken stock](#) of how EU economic and social policy coordination is supporting progress in the fight against homelessness and what might be done better in the future. *Confronting Homelessness in the Framework of the European Semester 2014 - A FEANTSA Monitoring Report* ([English/French](#)) explores the extent to which the European Semester is capturing and supporting Member States' efforts to tackle homelessness in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy. FEANTSA hopes the report will influence the way social policymakers at EU-level and in Member States engage with the Semester and support better engagement with tackling homelessness as part of broader efforts to tackle poverty from 2015.

## Call for Papers: European Research Conference "Families, Housing and Homelessness"

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The [Call for Papers](#) for the 10th European Research Conference on Homelessness, "Families, Housing and Homelessness" taking place at Dublin Castle, Dublin, Ireland on the 25th September 2015, is now available. Please send submissions to [teller@mri.hu](mailto:teller@mri.hu) by the 10th March 2015. Tweet the call for papers by clicking [this link](#).

## Call for Papers: Vol. 9, No. 2 of the European Journal of Homelessness

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The [Call for Papers](#) for Volume 9, Number 2 of the European Journal of Homelessness (Open Edition) is now open. Deadline: 8th May 2015.

# European Journal of Homelessness, Volume 8.2, December 2014

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Volume 8, Issue 2 of the European Journal of Homelessness (Open Edition) is now available [online](#) - and in print. To order a copy, please contact [information@feantsa.org](mailto:information@feantsa.org)

## Comparative Study on Data

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The fourth book in the European Observatory on Homelessness Comparative Studies series, "Extent and Profile of Homelessness in European Member States. A Statistical Update", is now [online](#) and in print. Read our [press release](#) about the data (now also in Serbian thanks to Housing Center Belgrade). To order a copy, please contact [information@feantsa.org](mailto:information@feantsa.org)

## Save the Date: FEANTSA 2015 Policy Conference

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Following the success of the Bergamo Policy Conference this year, the next [FEANTSA Policy Conference](#) will take place on the 18th, 19th and 20th June 2015 at Paris City Hall (Hôtel de Ville), Paris, France. The programme will be available in February and registration will open in March 2015. Tweet about the conference by clicking [here](#).

## Bergamo Declaration in Welsh

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The Bergamo Declaration, bringing together political messages from the FEANTSA Policy Conference, is now [available in Welsh](#), thanks to FEANTSA member Shelter Cymru.

## European Homeless and Mobile Citizens Network Kick-Off Meeting

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The European Homeless and Mobile Citizens Network, an Erasmus+ project that FEANTSA is involved in, kicked off with a [meeting](#) at the FEANTSA office earlier this month. Organisations involved presented their work and what they would like to achieve with the project, as well as giving information about migration issues in their respective Member States and discussing specific case studies. The plan for rolling out the project was discussed, including the aim to produce a toolkit on homelessness among EU citizens in European Union Member States.

## FEANTSA Interviewed About Housing First on Spanish Radio

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Ruth Owen, FEANTSA Policy Coordinator gave an interview about the principles and challenges of Housing First approaches to homelessness on the Spanish national radio programme '[En la calle alguien](#)'.

## EUROPE NEWS

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### Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review

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Despite an increase in employment levels in recent times, the European Commission [Employment and Social Situation](#)

[Quarterly Review](#) shows that Europe is still faced with slow economic recovery and challenges such as long-term unemployment and low employment opportunities for youth (15-24) and young adults aged 25-39. European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Marianne Thyssen, presented the Review earlier this month.

## Latvia Takes Over EU Council Presidency

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Latvia took over the [presidency](#) of the EU Council for the first time on the 1st January. Its [programme](#) sets out three priorities: competitive, digital and engaged Europe.

## 4th Convention Poverty and Social Exclusion – Proceedings Online

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Proceedings from the 4th Annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion are now available on the [Convention website](#) under 'Related Documents'. Two videos from the day are [also available](#).

## OP 7: Fair Mobility in Europe

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This [Occasional Paper](#), by former EU Commissioner László Andor, examines the discussion about mobility within the European Union with a specific focus on the United Kingdom. Responding to a tone of debate that he considers "distorted and unfair", Andor proposes several ways in which migration could be managed better without the need for treaty change to "cap" numbers.

## European Commission 2015 Work Programme

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The [European Commission Work Programme](#) sets out the Commission's plans for the 12 months ahead. It identifies actions which should make a positive difference for jobs, growth and investment in 2015.

## Country Fiches on ESIF Partnership Agreements

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All countries have now adopted their European Structural and Investment Fund "partnership agreements" with the European Commission, highlighting their key investment priorities for 2014-2020. Country fiches are [available](#) where you can find information about the national investment priorities and the number of "operational programmes" (OP) planned per country.

## Review of Recent Social Policy Reforms for a Fair and Competitive Europe

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The 2014 Social Protection Committee report, *Review of Recent Social Policy Reforms for a Fair and Competitive Europe* is its annual review of developments in social protection policy, including social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care in the European Union. Focusing on policy measures adopted in 2013-2014, the report assesses the main directions of social protection reforms. It is based on social reporting by European Member States as part of the National Social Report process. There is a section on youth exclusion, considered to be one of the biggest challenges to social Europe caused by the crisis. Significantly, the report also has a chapter on housing and homelessness.

# Update on Next HABITACT Peer Review: Odense, Denmark, 9-10th April 2015

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The next HABITACT Peer Review will be hosted by the City of Odense, among the cities that have been most successful at reducing homelessness in Denmark, and a founding member of the HABITACT network.

Key aspects of the Odense approach are: linking homelessness policy to the broader city strategy; Housing First; diversity of support models for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness; building links with neighbourhood community groups. Key themes proposed for this peer review are: compatibility of local social and security policies, the geography of homelessness, the pros and cons of a public housing model and the full continuum of support models (prevention to resettlement).

The independent expert nominated for this peer review is Dr Volker Busch-Geertsema, coordinator of the European Observatory on Homelessness. He will prepare a discussion paper for this peer review.

The target audience for this peer review are practitioners working in local authorities. The peer review will be preceded by a meeting about the URBACT III programme, a European funding programme for cities.

The draft agenda for the peer review is now available. To request a copy, please contact [info@habitact.eu](mailto:info@habitact.eu). More information about previous peer reviews is available on the [HABITACT website](#).

## MEMBER NEWS

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### Austria: Position Paper on Women-Specific Quality Standards in Housing First

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The [BAWO Women's Working Group in Vienna](#) has published a [Position Paper](#) on Women-Specific Quality Standards in relation to Housing First. It sets out principles that should be included in Housing First projects for women (and their children), from the perspective of the social workers involved in Vienna services working with homeless women.

### Belgium: Houselessness and Rooflessness in Flanders

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The [results](#) of a *Steunpunt Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin*-commissioned study into houselessness and rooflessness in Flanders are now available. The study, which was carried out in January and February 2014, found that 5,378 people were houseless or roofless in Flanders. Rooflessness was taken to mean people with no roof above their head and who sleep outside out of necessity or seek shelter in railway stations, squats, etc. 711 adults and 53 children used emergency winter shelters. Access to emergency winter shelters was denied 593 times. The emergency winter shelters are a last resort for people with no roof above their head. 4,614 people were houseless. They were staying in homeless hostels long-term or in supported housing managed by social services. One in three of them was under 18. 599 people and their families were at risk of being evicted from their homes.

### France: FNARS Calls for Immediate Reworking of Anti-Poverty Initiative

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An [assessment](#) of the first two years of the French government anti-poverty initiative, carried out by FNARS, outlines the worsening poverty levels in France as well as an increase in the number of socially-excluded families. The initiative, launched

in January 2013, has indeed led to significant improvements in access to benefits, but several reforms that would have been necessary to stop poverty increasing were not made, specifically as regards access to housing and to employment for the most vulnerable, say FNARS.

The report points to inadequate levels of affordable social housing being built, the reduction in help-to-build grants, and the ever-present 'thermometer-led management' of homelessness which does not allow the most vulnerable people to exit homelessness. Given the perceived failure of this public housing policy, FNARS calls for the immediate drawing up of a second anti-poverty initiative that specifically includes planning for long-term accommodation and affordable social housing, use of the private rental sector to help low-income families and a programme to move the 30,000 people accommodated with their families in poor conditions in hotels into decent accommodation.

## France: Symposium on Access to Housing for Homeless People

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For several years now, emergency accommodation, from temporary shelters to hotel rooms, has been increasingly used to respond to the increasing number of people at risk of social exclusion in France. To break away from this costly policy that is unacceptable for the people living in this type of accommodation, FNARS has adopted a resolution calling for all stakeholders to take responsibility and get people out of emergency structures and into housing. But how can this transition be encouraged and solutions put forward? To answer this question, the experiences of NGOs and service users and good practice were shared and round tables bringing government and NGO stakeholders together took place at the first [FNARS symposium](#) on the subject, entitled 'Beyond Emergency Measures'. The aim of this session was to reach out to the government by inviting it to support an agreement on 'Moving away from emergency measures and towards housing'.

## Germany: Participant Report from BAGW Conference on "Human Rights and Women's Rights in Homeless Services"

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As long as there is structural violence, a gender-sensitive approach is necessary. This was the conclusion of the recent BAGW [conference](#) on "Human Rights and Women's Rights in Homeless Services". The conference looked at the rights and needs of women in homelessness services from a human rights perspective.

## Ireland: Calls on Government to End Homelessness

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In their Annual Report for 2013, the Simon Communities of Ireland [reported](#) a substantial increase in the number of people seeking help from their services since 2011. 41% more people accessed the services in 2013 than in 2011. Simon is calling on the Irish Government to ensure that its plans for tackling the homelessness crisis are countrywide and offer long term solutions.

The Simon Communities welcomed the Irish Government's recent pledge to tackle the homelessness emergency but emphasised that emergency accommodation must only be used in the short term and the ultimate goal should be long term homes with support, and stressed that people should be prevented from becoming homeless in the first place, especially those currently losing their rented homes due to inadequate rent supplement payments.

Simon has submitted a [10 Point Plan to Government](#), outlining a list of items that they say must be prioritised immediately by Government if they are serious about ending long term homelessness by 2016.

These concerns were echoed by Focus Ireland at its Homeless Summit, where Focus presented a submission outlining [10 key actions](#) that it says need to be undertaken to address the current homeless crisis and to prevent homelessness by keeping people in their existing homes. Focus says it is vital that there is urgent access to move on accommodation to get people into a home and out of homelessness. Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust are running a new Housing First project, which specifically aims to get people in off the streets and into a home as quickly as possible.

## Netherlands: Increase in Number of Homeless People

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The number of homeless people in the Netherlands is increasing. Around 60,000 people had nowhere to live in 2013, an increase on 2010 figures which counted 55,230 homeless people. Federatie Opvang presented these figures in December. Federatie Opvang says there are reasons to believe that the increase comes from a growing group of "new homeless people" – people who have become homeless as a result of debts, unemployment or the inability to meet mortgage payments. Mental health issues do not appear to be present among this new group.

## Spain: Arrels Executive Committee Includes People with Experience of Homelessness

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The Arrels Fundació Executive Committee now includes two people with experience of homelessness who have previously used Arrels services. Their appointment is not for symbolic reasons, rather they will be involved in decision-making. See information in [Spanish](#) and [English](#).

## Spain: Discrimination in Housing Because of Ethnic Origin

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What is discrimination in housing on the grounds of ethnic origin? Provivienda has produced a [practical guide](#) to identifying examples of discrimination in housing.

## Ukraine: Fundraising for New Services

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Social Partnership Ukraine has launched a [crowdfunding initiative](#) to raise funds for an outreach project for people sleeping rough.

## UK: Youth Homelessness in Scotland 2014

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Far more young people are rough sleeping and sofa surfing than the official figures suggest according to the Homeless Action Scotland report, [Youth Homelessness in Scotland 2014](#). Although homelessness in Scotland overall is declining, the report highlights three major areas for concern: the much greater incidence of 'sofa surfing' (staying on friends and relatives sofas) than is reflected in official figures, young people's mental health and the fact that young homeless people's needs are seen to be more complex than they used to be which has an impact on homelessness services.

## UK: New Research Urges Government to Improve Services for Homeless People

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New [research](#) commissioned by Crisis UK reveals that half of all homeless people first become homeless aged under-21, with the majority going through the experience again and again because they don't get the help they need. The report provides the first ever profile of single homeless people across England, Wales and Scotland, showing the reasons people first become homeless and the consequences for their lives. It warns that people who become homeless at a young age often face a vicious cycle that leaves them vulnerable to violence, substance abuse and problems with mental and physical health. The report also found that: 61% of homeless women have experienced violence or abuse from a partner; nearly half of all homeless people have had problems with mental health; nearly two thirds of people seeking help from their local authority received either no advice, only general advice or were referred elsewhere and 10% of homeless people have never had a permanent home in their adult life.

The report calls on Governments in Westminster, Edinburgh and Cardiff to make changes. 9 recommendations have been made for



national and local governments.

## UK: Manifesto to End Homelessness

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Homeless Link have [published](#) "Let's make the difference, a new manifesto to end homelessness" based on expert views from across the homelessness sector. In the manifesto they call on the next government (elections are coming up in the UK) to take action on five key areas: rough sleeping, employment, housing, support for people with the most complex needs, and long-term strategy. They set out practical steps that will enable homelessness services to innovate and support people who become homeless to thrive.

## HEADLINES

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### Denmark: Danish Rail will Not Introduce Cheaper Fares for Homeless People

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Danish rail operator DSB is not prepared to re-introduce a ticket system that makes it possible for homeless people to use trains at a lower cost than other passengers. DSB refers to a trial carried out in 2011 when homeless people were allowed to use the trains in Copenhagen for three months for DKK 50. DSB says the system was unsuccessful, partly because it caused conflicts on trains as it was regarded as unfair to use different rates. There are several homeless people in Denmark who have unpaid ticket fines worth up to DKK 100,000 (EUR 13,439.49).

### France: Accommodating Homeless People in Hotels Must Become 'an Exception'

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Many homeless people in France are temporarily housed in hotel rooms. However, the French President wants to put a stop to this situation, a move which housing and homelessness NGOs have been calling for for years. The government is in the process of drawing up a 'plan to reduce hotel use'. The aim is to help destitute people exit rough sleeping and find stable housing and not to accommodate them in hotels anymore.

### Poland: National Homeless Count

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The Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy recently organised a point-in-time count of the homeless population, and tasked local governments with carrying out the counting in each local area. Police, social workers and volunteers carried out the counting process, which took place mainly at night.

A nationwide survey of homeless people is conducted every two years. The last count, carried out on the night of 7-8 February 2013 counted 30.7 thousand homeless people, with approximately 22 thousand housed in shelter facilities and approximately 8.5 thousand not benefitting from this type of assistance.

The results of the count show that homelessness is most concentrated in urban areas. Two-thirds of the total homeless population are in Warsaw. The count found that more than 0.1 percent of the Polish population is homeless. A large proportion of the homeless people counted were over 50 years of age. 80% (more than 24.5 thousand people) were men, 14.2% (4.3 thousand) were women, and 5% (1.5 thousand) were children. Children were housed primarily in structures for lone parents. The study showed the Silesian province had the most homeless people (3.8 thousand), followed by Mazowieckie (3.1 thousand) and Lower Silesia (2.9 thousand).

The survey counted the number of local authority-run homeless services. In total, there are approximately 650 aid centers, most of them night shelters, which have a total of 22-23 thousand residents. Additional locations are opened in the autumn-

winter period.

Homelessness services are the responsibility of local governments. The central Ministry of Labour has allocated 5 million PLN to homelessness, which is available to NGOs through calls for tender.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### Health Homelessness and Multiple Exclusion: Symposium

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The UK Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health's annual [symposium](#) on health, homelessness and multiple exclusion takes place in London on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th March 2015. This year's programme focuses on the links between poor health and homelessness, health service responses, in the UK and with European input. These include: Faculty of Homeless and Inclusion Health pathway programme; Inclusion Health: defining a new discipline; how can health services identify the most vulnerable?; the balance between specialist and mainstream healthcare provision of the most excluded; processes of exclusion – can health services reform?; how can we reduce premature mortality at the extremes?; setting the research agenda for homelessness and health; new health commissioning models for homeless and excluded groups; defining education and training needs for clinicians who work with homeless and other severely excluded groups; identifying new service models or health service responses that work; considering homeless people's health issues and those of other severely excluded groups in the wider context of health inequalities in society. The symposium can be viewed online.

## PUBLICATIONS

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### The Finnish Homelessness Strategy: An International Review

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The International Review of the Finnish Homelessness Strategy, to be published by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment on the 10th February, reviews nine aspects of the Finnish national homelessness strategy from an international perspective. The review was carried out by a review team made up of Finnish, Swedish, UK and US researchers. The review team visited several homelessness services, including Housing First services and specialist support for various groups of homeless people, such as former offenders and young people who have experienced homelessness in spring and autumn 2014. The team also conducted a wide range of interviews, discussion groups and focus groups with service providers, representatives of municipalities and national-level policy makers. Group interviews with people who had experience of homelessness were also undertaken in three communal Housing First services. FEANTSA will issue a press release on the review and make it available on our website once it is published. A [seminar](#) entitled 'Facts, Findings and the Future' will take place in Helsinki from 12.00 - 14.00 on the 10th February to present the review. The seminar will be conducted in English and will be broadcast live [online](#). It will also be available to view as a recording after the seminar. A press conference in Finnish and English will precede the seminar at 10.00 and will also be livestreamed.

### New Profile of Severe and Multiple Disadvantage

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LankellyChase Foundation with Heriot-Watt University has released the most robust research to date on severe and multiple disadvantage in England. *Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England* draws together previously separate datasets from homelessness, offending and substance misuse treatment systems. It also takes into account available data around mental health and poverty. It delivers the latest and most comprehensive statistics on people facing severe and multiple disadvantage: where they live, what their lives are like, how effectively they are supported by services, and the economic implications of the disadvantages they face.

### Dealing with Debt for Tenants with an Imminent Eviction

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Impuls – The Netherlands Centre for Social Care Research, part of Radboud University Medical Centre, has [examined](#) how the Dutch cities Rotterdam and Amsterdam, their social housing associations and their debt counselling services work on solutions to problematic debts of tenants with imminent evictions. The study has shown that, despite promising policy plans and cooperation agreements to prevent evictions, tenants with rent arrears in both cities face many difficulties in resolving their financial problems. The study shows that tenants wait too long before asking for help and often do not find the available debt counselling services, that the access criteria of these services exclude many tenants, and that professionals have limited time to offer adequate support leading to structural solutions. Both cities need to strengthen their approach in order to offer effective support and to prevent housing evictions due to rent arrears.

## Helping Youth Overcome Homelessness

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The Homeless Youth Collaborative on Developmental Evaluation have developed 9 evidence-based, guiding [principles](#) to help youth overcome homelessness.

## Contemporary Housing Issues in a Globalised World

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This [book](#), edited by Padraic Kenna, examines and discusses key contemporary housing issues in the context of today's globalised housing systems. The book develops a new paradigm, working towards the possibility of an alternative future. The major themes considered are: the crisis in mortgage market regulation; housing rights; and an examination of responses to the decline and regeneration of inner cities, including legal issues around squatting in developed economies and changes in tenure patterns away from home-ownership.

## End of Life and Social Exclusion

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The French National End of Life Observatory has published its *2014 Report: End of Life and Social Exclusion*. The report examines the experiences of socially-excluded people towards the end of their lives and what happens in end of life care. It shows and explains not only the difficulties socially-excluded people face, whether they be sleeping rough, living in their own home or in shelters, care homes or health care institutions, but also the difficulties our society and our health care system have in adapting to these often 'non-standard' situations. By writing this report as a series of end of life experiences and health care trajectories, the Observatory hopes to broaden thinking about end of life care.

## Understanding and Addressing Local Opposition to Affordable Housing Projects

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This [research](#) investigated the causal roots of local opposition to affordable housing projects in Australia. It shows that planning concerns can mask prejudice against low-income residents. However community opposition can be exacerbated by dismissive attitudes by government. Developers and government both have roles to better explain to the public what affordable housing is, allay community fears through education, and ensure planning processes are clear and fairly implemented.

## A Gender-Based Approach to Service Provision for Socially-Excluded People

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This [study](#) used a gender-based approach firstly to carry out a survey of directors of and social workers in homeless accommodation in the Ile-de-France region (in 2010/11) and secondly to survey service users in the accommodation centres (in 2012/13). The aim was to analyse the feasibility of and need for mixed and "gendered" homeless accommodation services in order to improve services and support for people in need.



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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-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

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