



FEANTSA NEWS

2014 FEANTSA Policy Conference – Save the Date

The FEANTSA policy [conference](#) "Confronting homelessness in the EU: Seeking out the next generation of best practices" will take place in Bergamo (Italy) on 24th-25th October 2014 and will provide space to discuss a wide range of challenges and solutions. It will be an opportunity for 300 practitioners from across Europe to exchange information on policy and practice to prevent and reduce homelessness. The main objectives of the conference are: 1) to support policy and practice in the field of homelessness by driving innovation and seeking out the next generation of best practices; 2) to contribute to the implementation of the Europe2020 Strategy and in particular the EU Social Investment Package adopted by the European Commission in February 2013 and 3) to provide space to test new ways of pooling expertise and building networks. Put the date in your diaries!

Call for Papers: 9th European Research Conference on Homelessness

The annual European Homelessness Research Conference has become globally important as the leading forum for discussion of homelessness research and policy across the European Union. The 9th Annual Research Conference on Homelessness in Europe entitled "Homelessness in Times of Crisis" will take place in Warsaw on September 19th, 2014. The conference will be organised by FEANTSA's European Observatory on Homelessness and hosted by the University of Warsaw. The call for papers is [out now](#). The deadline for submissions is the 7th April. The key note speakers have been confirmed as Marja Elsinga and Paweł Jaskulski.

10 Messages to Get the European Semester on Track in the Fight Against Poverty and Homelessness

On the 10th March 2014, the European Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) held a policy debate on the 2014 European Semester. FEANTSA took the opportunity to present [10 messages](#) to the EPSCO on how the European Semester can better support the fight against poverty and homelessness from 2014 onwards.

NGOs Call On Decision Makers to Ensure Access to Basic Bank Account

FEANTSA has co-signed a [letter](#) to decision-makers involved in negotiations on the Payment Accounts Directive to ask them to make sure the legislation protects vulnerable users. Part of the legislation regards access to a basic bank account. The letter makes the following recommendations:

- Member States must ensure that consumers can open free or reasonably-priced basic accounts at banks close to where they are.

- Banks' right to refuse to open or close accounts should be limited to very specific cases.
- Features of basic bank accounts should mean that the account is actually useful to the user and therefore without many restrictions or limits.
- Binding measures should ensure that basic payment accounts are a legal right for citizens and available free of charge or at a reasonable fee, irrespective of circumstances.

Joint Press Release on Child Poverty

FEANTSA is one of a group of NGOs that recently issued a joint [press release](#) stating that there can be no 'inclusive growth' (one of the Europe 2020 strategy goals) while increasing child poverty is a reality.

FEANTSA Part of 'Social Europe' Working Group

FEANTSA is part of a working group, launched on 28 January by Friends of Europe that aims to contribute to opening up the "social" dimension of the EU to a wider audience and to encouraging policy-makers to put social issues high on the policy agenda. By building on available studies and research, the high-level group – comprised of social partners and independent experts – intends to draft a recommendations and agenda-setting report to present to the future European Parliament and Commission members on the way ahead for European social issues. The group has published a [report](#) intended as a stimulus to widen the debate about the European Union's social policy options once a new European Commission and European Parliament are in place.

Seminar on Participation

FEANTSA is co-organising a [seminar](#) on participation and homelessness. The seminar, hosted by Fonds Soziales Wien, will take place in Vienna on the 3rd April. It will look at what participation entails and the challenges to participation and feature speakers from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Romania and Scotland and will include workshops for participants. The programme is [online](#), in English and German.

"Health and Well-being for All - Holistic Health Services for People Who Are Homeless" – Now in German

The FEANTSA June 2013 [Policy Statement](#), "Health and Well-being for All - Holistic Health Services for People Who Are Homeless", is now available in German, very kindly translated by FEANTSA members BAWO.

EUROPEAN NEWS

HABITACT Newsletter

Issue 18 of the HABITACT newsletter is [online](#).

FEAD Regulation Signed

Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament and Dimitris Kourkoulas, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs, have officially signed the [regulation](#) on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

EPSCO Ministers Recognise Need to Fight Poverty

Following its [meeting](#) on the 10th March on the 2014 European Semester and progress on the Europe2020 strategy, the European Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) asked Member States to review and strengthen their efforts to reduce poverty, an "essential EU commitment".

Prior to the meeting, FEANTSA prepared [10 messages](#) for the EPSCO on how the European Semester can better support the fight against poverty and homelessness from 2014 onwards.

EU Social Protection Committee Report on Social Situation in Europe

The [report](#) "Social Europe – many ways, one objective" stresses the fact that the key factor for achieving the Europe2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is working toward policy coherence between the social and economic objectives of the European Union. The report contains 2012 survey data indicating that poverty has reached a 6-year high: close to 25% of the European population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Since the adoption of the Europe2020 poverty target in 2010, 6.7 million more people live in poverty or social exclusion (with increases in more than a third of Member States). In some Member States, the growth of relative poverty exceeds 2 percentage points per year. Rising material deprivation is lowering living standards for significant parts of the population in some countries. Income inequality is growing across and within Member States, particularly in the countries that witnessed the largest increases in unemployment. There is a section on homelessness in the report, which shows homelessness rising in a large number of MS.

EU Project on Housing and Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence

In the Daphne "[Street-to-Home](#)" project, researchers from five European countries (UK, Germany, Bulgaria, Spain and Norway) have been looking at the support needs of vulnerable women. This EU project addresses the lack of an integrated approach to housing and on-going social support for women at highest risk of being subjected to violence. The key target groups are women who, for the purposes of this project, are referred to as women with multiple needs. This can include: women experiencing violence and abuse; women offenders; women with mental health issues; women engaged in sex work; women who are members of street gangs; women with problematic drug use.

European Court of Justice Judgment on Dutch Social Housing

The European Court of Justice 27 February 2014 [judgment](#) marks an important step in the "Dutch case" on social housing (cases E 2/2005 and N 642/2009). A decade ago, the European Commission challenged the scope of intervention of social landlords in the Netherlands and defined social housing as a service of general interest for the most vulnerable. The practical consequence of the application of this decision is that the economic model of social housing in the Netherlands has been somewhat destabilised. This decision has also led commercial housing operators to contest the regimes of social housing in other countries, such as in Luxembourg, Belgium, Sweden and France. The Court of Justice judgment means that social housing organisations can now act against the decision of the European Commission and more generally call into question the European Commission's power in defining services of general interest.

PUSH Europe Workshop

The first PUSH Europe workshop will take place on the 6 May 2014 in Brussels. It will focus on "Integrated Housing and Services for People with Support Needs". The workshop will offer practitioners in housing with support an opportunity for practical exchange in a European context. It will focus on good practices in housing with support for people with disabilities,

people with mental health needs and homeless people.

[PUSH Europe](#) (Practice and Understanding in Supported Housing) is an emerging network of practitioners that want to engage at EU level to strengthen capacity for personalised, community-based services that enable people with support needs to live independently and be included in society. It is a joint initiative by EASPD, FEANTSA, CECODHAS and Mental Health Europe.

Commission Stocktaking on Europe 2020 Strategy

Almost halfway into the EU2020 strategy, the European Commission has published a [communication](#) showing how the EU and Member States are advancing towards the 2020 targets. It shows that progress on the 2020 targets has so far been mixed. The EU is on course to meet or to come close to its education, climate and energy targets but is not on track to meet its employment, research and development and poverty reduction goals.

The communication sets the scene for a future review of the strategy. The European Council held an initial discussion on the issue, based on the Commission's findings, at its meeting on 20-21 March. A public consultation on the matter which will take place later this year should yield further evidence and will be an opportunity for Europeans to share their views on the post-crisis EU growth strategy. Following the consultation, the Commission will make further proposals for the strategy early in 2015.

Eurostat to Publish Data on Homelessness in Census Hub

Eurostat [intends](#) to publish data on homelessness in the Eurostat Census Hub (to be opened on 30 June 2014). However, given this is the first population census exercise which formally tries to cover homeless households, the data is to be used with caution.

European Commission Evictions Study – Kick-off Meeting

The European pilot project on "homelessness prevention in the context of evictions" was launched at the end of February with a kick-off meeting of all national experts, the core research team and the project steering group. The final version of the template for the national eviction profiles of all 28 member states has been sent to all national experts and draft eviction profiles are expected in mid-May.

UNITED NATIONS NEWS

UN Housing Rights Expert Discusses Homeless and Housing

The United Nations Independent Expert on the Right to Housing recently [called](#) for the decriminalisation of homelessness, better data on homelessness and better access to housing.

UNHRC Expert on Human Rights and Foreign Debt on Homelessness in Greece

In a recent [report](#), the United Nations Human Rights Council Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, asks Greece to step up efforts on homelessness.

MEMBER NEWS

France: 'Thermometer-Led' Control and Unstable Accommodation Still the Norm

FNARS has issued a [press release](#) criticising the situation in France whereby, despite the creation of more shelter places in 2013 and the increase to the accommodation budget in 2014, the 'thermometer-led' management of homeless services is still going on: just like last year, a number of places were opened up this winter in the form of nights in hotel rooms, improvised places in gymnasia and camp beds put up in emergency hostels or day centres and night shelters. And, just like last year, these places are beginning to close as spring approaches. The Collective of United Associations in Favour of a New Public Housing Policy for Homeless and Housing Excluded People issued another [press release](#) at the end of the month.

Poland: Housing First – Evidence-Based Advocacy Project

The Camillian Mission for Social Assistance (CMSA) is a partner organisation in a [project](#) entitled "Housing First – evidence based advocacy", along with Ius Medicinæ Foundation and Salvation Army in Iceland. The project was awarded a grant by the Citizens for Democracy Programme financed by the European Economic Area and operated by The Batory Foundation in Poland. The project was designed by the Mission within its Advocacy Programme on Research, Cooperation and Transparency and will be implemented by the Mission's staff, including a researcher, a legal professional, a psychologist and streetworkers. The project begins in April 2014 and will last two years. It is coordinated by [Julia Wygnańska](#) at CMSA.

The project offers sustainable evidenced-based advocacy for a change in attitudes towards support systems for severely excluded people who live 'on the streets' and do not use institutional social services. Evidence of the problem will be collected through desk and empirical research based on data accumulated by those who provide support to this group (extent of the problem, real institutional and individual cost of the problem, stakeholders' attitudes) and disseminated in stakeholder consultation seminars and conferences, websites and online newsletters as well as paper publications. It is hoped that it will create a foundation for the future implementation of 'Housing First' programmes in Poland.

Spain: Interview with FEANTSA Board Member

Joan Uribe, Director of Sant Joan de Déu – Serveis Socials in Barcelona and social researcher was [interviewed](#) on his research into homelessness. He addresses questions such as "What kind of people are homeless people?", "Do they all need the same services?" and "What is the best way of helping them to get back into society?". He stresses the need to work towards cultivating homeless people's autonomous living in supported accommodation where they receive support from social workers.

UK: Getting the Right Help at the Right Time to Women Who Are Homeless or at Risk

Women who are homeless are among the most marginalised people in society. Women's homelessness often occurs after prolonged experiences of trauma, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, frequently within the home and often follows on from and results in mental ill health and substance use, and many other problems. These women's histories are full of missed opportunities to get the right help at the right time. Working with a growing number of women, St Mungo's has realised just how much women's needs differ from those of men and have seen how women do less well in support services which predominantly work with and are designed for men. The Rebuilding Shattered Lives project set out to change this. It shared understanding of the particular experiences and challenges women face and explored how organisations can ensure women get the right help, at the right time. The [final report](#) is now available.

UK: 'No Second Night Out' England Report

The concept of No Second Night Out (NSNO) in the UK was developed to ensure rough sleepers are helped off the streets as quickly as possible, that nobody lives on the streets, and that once helped, people do not return to the streets. Following the publication of the first report from the UK Government's homelessness working group, local authorities across the country pledged to adopt the NSNO principles. This Homeless Link [report](#) provides a snapshot of the development and roll-out of services based on the principles of NSNO in England. Although most local authorities have signed up to NSNO principles, not every area has developed a specific new service response.

UK: Impact of Sanctions

Ahead of a Scottish Government debate on Responding to Welfare Reform on 4th March, Homeless Action Scotland provided a written [briefing](#) for MSPs outlining its concerns about the toughening direction on sanctions being pursued by the government. A consistent approach must be taken across Scotland to support people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of a benefits sanction, says Homeless Action Scotland.

HEADLINES

Czech Republic: Homelessness Strategy

The Czech Republic has a homelessness [strategy](#) entitled "Strategy for Preventing and Tackling Homelessness in the Czech Republic by 2020". At a recent European Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) [meeting](#), the Czech government stated that it wanted homelessness and social housing to be EU Semester priorities.

Ireland: New Group Tasked with Ending Homelessness

Based on recommendations from the Homelessness Oversight Group in Ireland, a new Homelessness Policy Implementation Team will be established and charged with achieving a Government objective of ending long-term homelessness by 2016.

One of the team's first tasks will be to prepare a plan to make the transition from shelter-led to a housing-led approach. The plan will set targets for the supply of suitable properties for people who are homeless.

Italy: Homelessness Count in Rome

During the nights of the 17th, 18th and 19th March, volunteers working on behalf of the *Fondazione DeBenedetti* and the City of Rome carried out the first census of the homeless population in the capital city. More information is available at www.frd.org.

UK: Rough Sleeping on the Increase

Rough sleeping has greatly increased since the current UK government came to power as cuts to local housing and homeless services take effect, Government figures show. Rough sleeping in England has increased for the fourth year in a row. The rate of increase this year has reduced to 5 per cent compared to 37 per cent in 2010. The picture is variable, though, with around half of areas seeing a decrease and the other half seeing an increase.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Launch of Women's Homelessness in Europe Network (WHEN) Website

The Women's Homelessness in Europe Network (WHEN) has launched its [website](#).

WHEN was developed in response to a lack of academic and policy attention on the gender dimensions of homelessness. Research has highlighted issues such as the disproportionate rates at which lone women parents experience homelessness and the clear associations between gender-based or domestic violence and women's homelessness. However, the evidence base on these areas is inconsistent, incomplete and sometimes outdated and there is also a distinct lack of international comparative analysis on gender within homelessness.

WHEN also seeks to highlight and address gaps in current thinking and research. Key concerns include insufficient understanding of women's experiences of chronic homelessness and women's experience of homelessness through the life-course ranging from youth homelessness to homelessness in later life. The wider associations between gender, poverty and housing exclusion are also within WHEN's sphere of interest.

The core objectives of the network are:

- To enhance the understanding of issues at the core of women's homelessness.
- To foster international collaborative research on gender dimensions of homelessness.
- To promote and develop academic scholarship and to generate practical and policy relevant research.
- To facilitate dissemination of research, analysis and debate on women and homelessness.

First Comes Housing, Then Comes Ethics - BAWO Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe Conference

14th-16th	May	2014
Hotel Novapark, Fischeraustraße 22, Graz, Steiermark, Austria		

Access to Housing, the Right to Housing (in the European context too), Different Aspects of Social Work and Networking are the main focal points for this [conference](#). The title defines the content of the conference: housing must be secured first, and then everything else can come after - a very clear order of priorities. Using the problem of making the housing market accessible to everyone in Austria as a starting point, the conference will demand that housing be a fundamental right and not a matter of charity. BAWO welcomes registrations from interested participants outside Austria. The conference will be in German, with two presentations in English on the Friday. To book your place, please send an email to fachtagung@bawo.at

Tackling Housing Exclusion and Destitution: Are You Aware of Any Innovative Approaches?

Are you aware of any creative or innovative solutions to tackling housing exclusion and destitution – small or large scale, in developed or developing economies, widely accepted or under-recognised? These may include support with self- and community initiated approaches, new forms of temporary and permanent housing and the renovation of disused buildings.

Heriot-Watt University have been commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation under its Housing and Poverty Programme to identify lessons that can be learnt for the UK in tackling extreme housing exclusion. The focus is on groups that are not typically entitled to housing benefit, including refused asylum-seekers, economic and undocumented migrants and

destitute individuals. The University are keen to hear of examples of new or flexible approaches to dealing with housing exclusion and destitution in developed and developing economies that are worthy of further investigation in terms of assessing their relevance for the UK.

The intention is that once they have identified a wide range of potentially useful housing solutions, the University will select ten to twelve countries worthy of further investigating. In this more detailed investigation, they will be enlisting country-based experts who will assist us in the research on a paid basis.

If you are aware of any such examples, please contact [Gina Netto](#) by the 14th of April 2014.

PUBLICATIONS

Homelessness and the Law: Constitution, Criminal Law and Human Rights

It is common knowledge that homelessness and the law are closely related. The relationship has not always been a good one for the individuals concerned. With the introduction of the welfare state, much has improved. The prevention of homelessness and the protection of homeless people has become a constitutional imperative. Yet, this does not mean to say that the law always works in favour of the inclusion and emancipation of homeless people. Rigid exclusions remain, in particular for immigrants and repressive responses are on the rise. In the meantime, courts soften the worse consequences of these policies by offering human rights remedies. This [book](#) brings together a selection of legal issues relating to the plight of homeless people. They are placed under the headings of: constitution, repression, immigration and human rights. The chapters give a unique insight into the latest policy developments in developed countries. The chapters cover legal issues in Australia, Canada, Switzerland and seven European Union member states. The conclusion is that homelessness creates a curious paradox in our legal orders. The same system that is responsible for exclusions and repression (in terms of national positive law) calls for the protection of the victims of these practices (in terms of human rights guarantees).

Exploring ACA's Impact

This [article](#) explores the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the USA and provides approaches to build service systems that might be considered useful to increase capacity for care and remove access barriers for persons who have experienced homelessness with co-occurring medical and behavioral health conditions.

Coming of Age: Reimagining the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada

The goal of this [report](#) is to present an argument for approaching how we respond to youth homelessness in a new way. The report achieves this by pulling together key information about youth homelessness, to better inform how we respond to the problem. As a peer-reviewed research document, Dr. Gaetz draws on an existing base of research in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, in order to identify effective approaches to youth homelessness policy and practice.

Explanations for Homelessness in Norway

The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), commissioned by the National Housing Bank, has [examined](#) explanations for homelessness in Norway and mapped the number of homeless people. Homelessness has traditionally been seen either as a structural or an individual problem. This division is still valid, but structural explanations (e.g. unemployment and lack of housing) are not necessarily in opposition with individual explanations (e.g. illness, addictions, other personal problems and lack of social, cultural and/or financial resources), concludes the report.

Case studies were carried out in six municipalities. For more information, contact the project manager and research director [Evelyn Dyb](#).

Contemporary Housing Issues in a Globalized World

The globalization of housing finance led to the global financial crisis, which has created new barriers to adequate and affordable housing. It presents major challenges for current housing law and policy, as well as for the development of housing rights. This [book](#) examines and discusses key contemporary housing issues in the context of today's globalized housing systems.

The book takes up the challenge of developing a new paradigm, working towards the possibility of an alternative future. Revolving around three constellations of writing by diverse contributors, each chapter sets out a clear and developed approach to contemporary housing issues. The first major theme considers the crisis in mortgage market regulation, the development of mortgage securitization and comparisons between Spain and Ireland, two countries at the epicentre of the global housing market crisis. The second thematic consideration focuses on housing rights within the European human rights architecture, within national constitutions, and those arising from new international instruments, with their particular relevance for persons with disabilities and developing economies. The third theme incorporates an examination of responses to the decline and regeneration of inner cities, legal issues around squatting in developed economies, and changes in tenure patterns away from home-ownership.

Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2013 Yearbook

This [yearbook](#) informs the reader about the latest figures and policy in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Belgium, looking at income poverty and the reasons for this and comparing it with the many facets of poverty in Europe. It also looks at the links between disability and poverty, the difficulties presented by the job market, the specific needs and solutions for people of foreign origin and the ambivalent evolution of poverty reduction policies in Europe.

Putting a Stop to Begging with Children

This [paper](#) addresses a very sensitive subject: begging with children. The subject is sensitive from a human perspective because it is about relationships between parents and children and about relationships between housed people and roofless people. The subject is politically sensitive because it is linked to numerous modern day controversies about immigration, security, social assistance and Europe itself. It is sensitive from a technical point of view because implementing the law is always a complicated issue. In the spirit of neither wishful thinking nor defeatism, this paper makes the case for a firm implementation of the ban on begging with children. First of all, it proposes that everyone can contribute by reporting instances of begging with children they see. Secondly it proposes that laws, which could benefit from clarification, be respected so that the children involved can be better protected or, if necessary, put into care. Lastly, it situates the subject in a European context.

Living Alongside Homeless People: Representations of and Attitudes to Poverty

The figure of a homeless person is emblematic of modern day exclusion. Starting from the hypothesis that perceptions of and attitudes towards them are structured around a tension between identification and otherness and between the desire to pass the buck and the will to help, this [book](#) has a dual objective. First of all, it analyses the processes of constructing homeless people's identity today. It also aims to understand the dynamics at work in the sharing of space and interaction between homeless people and other users of public space and, more specifically, those who meet them daily in this space. "Living alongside homeless people" means being confronted with the otherness, marginalisation and social and economic inequality they represent. Questioning the "everyday" categories built by homeless people's "neighbours" means looking at the way these people are perceived and the types of reactions they provoke: compassion, tolerance, indifference, rejection, contempt. These attitudes, more or less constant and consistent, reveal society's ambivalent position towards homeless people.



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This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
 - relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>

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