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FEANTSA STRONGLY CONDEMNS LATEST STEP TAKEN TOWARDS CRIMINALISATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN HUNGARY

The [European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless \(FEANTSA\)](#) strongly denounces the [proposed amendment](#) to the Hungarian Constitution which will forbid living in a public space.

Outlawing rough sleeping is a violation of human rights. Instead of following the legal obligation to protect and promote the human rights of people who are homeless, enshrining a human rights violation in the Hungarian Constitution further stigmatises and marginalises these people.

Criminalising homelessness is not the answer. Criminal sanctions are ineffective and simply aim to move the visible problem of homelessness out of public view, rather than offering any real solution to the problem.

Homelessness is not a choice, it is certainly not a crime and it certainly can be ended. The first of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) commits to eradicating poverty in all its forms. The third Goal commits to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. All EU Member States, including Hungary, have adopted this Sustainable Development Programme. Furthermore, the [UN New Urban Agenda](#) includes a commitment to “combat and eliminate the criminalisation” of homelessness – Hungary again being a signatory to this.

Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director: “It’s ironic that this should happen on the same day when nearly 400 people from the homeless sector and beyond have come together to demand concrete action to eliminate homelessness in Europe. Criminalisation is completely contrary to the spirit of our discussions and we condemn it completely.”

Leilani Farha, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to housing: “The fervour with which Hungary is criminalising homelessness makes it an outlier amongst European Member States. It turns an already bad situation into an egregious one, worthy of

PRESS RELEASE



European Federation
of National Organisations
Working with the Homeless
194 Chaussée de Louvain, 1210 Brussels, Belgium
T +32 (0)2 538 66 69 • information@feantsa.org
www.feantsa.org

international concern. Hungary must immediately reverse its position and recognize that sleeping rough and living in homelessness is not a crime: it's an egregious violation of human rights and a failure of governments to implement the right to housing."

We call on Hungary to retract the proposed constitutional amendments and instead to work towards providing effective and dignified housing solutions and support.

For more information, please contact FEANTSA Communications Officer, Emma Nolan: emma.nolan@feantsa.org

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For comment, please contact
| information@feantsa.org | +32 (0)2 538 66 69 |

Find out more from www.feantsa.org 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