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European Parliament repeats calls for EU research into female homelessness

FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, welcomes the European Parliament's repeated call for specific EU research to be done into the causes and drivers of women's homelessness

Two resolutions by the European Parliament within the space of six weeks have called for more research into the rates and causes of women's homelessness.

The first resolution, from 14 April 2016, on *Meeting the antipoverty target in light of increasing household costs*, states that with rising household costs being a key driver of women's homelessness, "more research is required on the rates and causes of women losing or leaving their homes."

The second resolution, dated 26 May 2016, on *Poverty: a gender perspective*, reasserted the need to "undertake research into female homelessness and its causes and drivers, as the phenomenon is inadequately captured in current data."

These calls come at a time when women's homelessness, especially among younger women, is steadily increasing. Whilst figures show that in most countries, women make up at least one quarter of the homeless population, the numbers are in fact likely to be much higher. This is because women often engage in coping strategies such as sofa surfing, returning to an abusive relationship or sleeping rough in parks and stations in order to avoid presenting at homeless services or sleeping rough in more prominent spaces, where they may be more at risk of violence or harassment. This leads to them suffering from 'hidden homelessness,' which results in women's homelessness being excluded from policy development.

Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director: "Another report highlighting the urgency of addressing women's homelessness - it is time that the European Commission shows true commitment to this issue by funding research into both the structural inequalities women face (female poverty, lack of affordable housing) and the specific vulnerability of homeless women and, women who have been faced with violence and abuse often at an early stage of their lives .

Whereas research has shown that one in three women cite domestic abuse as the main cause of their homelessness¹, little research has been done into the other risk factors which can lead to women's homelessness (such as poverty, unemployment, part-time low wage jobs and lack of availability of affordable housing). Further research would not only enhance the understanding of women's homelessness, it would also facilitate innovative

¹Moss and Singh, *Women Rough Sleepers in Europe : Homelessness and Victims of Domestic Violence* 2015.



FEANTSA

Press Release

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and effective service delivery to both address their needs whilst homeless, and help them return to housing stability.

The Women's Homelessness in Europe Network (WHEN), linked to the European Observatory on Homelessness, would be well-placed to undertake such EU-funded research into these issues.

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Notes for editors:

1. [FEANTSA](http://www.feantsa.org) 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. The [European Observatory on Homelessness](http://www.euro-observatory.org) carries out transnational research on homelessness and housing exclusion.
3. [WHEN](http://www.when-europe.org) is the Women's Homelessness in Europe Network which is an international network for research and collaboration in the field of women's homelessness. Its contact person is [Nicholas Pleace](mailto:nicholas.pleace@york.ac.uk) at the University of York.