



FEANTSA

Press Release

European Federation of National Organisations working
with the Homeless

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Time for EU to acknowledge increase in levels of homelessness as a social emergency

**Four million people a year experience homelessness – a situation which Freek Spinnewijn,
FEANTSA Director, has described as a “social emergency.”**

“Crisis is an overused term at the EU level and yet what we are currently witnessing is nothing short of a social emergency. Four million people experience homelessness every year and yet there still seems to be a frankly staggering lack of awareness of this fact at the EU level. Homelessness is an extreme form of poverty and is a violation of human rights. It does not just have a potentially irreversible effect on the individual concerned; it also has an enormous negative impact on cities and society as a whole, acting as a barrier to employment and social rights.”

The Europe 2020 strategy has set out to lift 20 million people from poverty and yet the levels of homelessness have been increasing across almost every single European country and among certain groups of people, such as youth or families, the percentage increase is in the double-digits.

Last week, The European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) gathered over 350 homelessness experts in Brussels, Belgium, at its annual conference to discuss the ways in which the sector is responding to this crisis, and to highlight to the (too) few attendant EU policy-makers that European support and resources are urgently needed to find lasting solutions to this continent-wide emergency.

A Written Declaration calling for an EU Homelessness Strategy is currently gathering support within the European Parliament and if successful, will call on the European Commission to develop a homelessness action plan. One of the first and clearest ways it can do this is to integrate a clear focus on homelessness into actions such as the newly adopted EU Urban Agenda and the recent proposal to create an EU Social Rights Pillar. FEANTSA is ready and waiting to help it do so.

With an estimated half a million people sleeping rough or in emergency/temporary accommodation every night, the European Union can't afford not to act. The homelessness sector needs the help of other societal forces to end homelessness and this needs to be backed by strong European-level support.

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For comment, please contact Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director

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Find out more from www.feantsa.org or call 0032 2 538 66 69

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.