



PRESS RELEASE

European Commission Reports Growing Significance of Homelessness in the EU

The latest European Commission Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review shows a rise in homelessness in many countries because of the economic crisis. Young people and migrants are disproportionately affected. The European Council called last week on the Member States and the Commission to work on adequate schemes to address homelessness.

The latest European Commission Quarterly [Review](#) on the Employment and Social Situation in the European Union (EU) shows that homelessness is increasing in the EU. It notes a shift in the profile of homeless people with homelessness rising amongst people who have lost their job in the recession and are facing difficulties in paying rent or mortgages. Homelessness is expected to become an increasingly serious social problem over the coming years. It is increasing in particular amongst foreign nationals and young people. The review shows that budget-cuts in the context of austerity measures reduce the capacity of services and welfare measures to alleviate homelessness.

Homelessness is a serious challenge for the EU. At the same time it is clear that countries which develop and maintain effective, integrated strategies to tackle the problem continue to make progress. Conversely, those which lack effective policies or criminalise homelessness are unable to achieve this. Even countries that have made good progress on homelessness in the past face a reversal of their success if they cut funding and abandon more ambitious policies.

This report comes at a time of growing pressure on the EU to enhance support and coordination for Member States on this issue. Last week, the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council [Conclusions](#) on "Responding to demographic challenges through enhanced participation in the labour market and society by all", called on Member States and the European Commission to "develop and promote adequate schemes for persons who are homeless".

This year Member States' National Reform Programme reports submitted in the framework of Europe 2020 show that homelessness is an urgent priority with twelve countries explicitly mentioning homelessness.

In September 2011, the European Parliament adopted a [Resolution](#) calling for the EU to step up its co-ordination and support of Member States' policies with an EU homelessness strategy

The Quarterly Review demonstrates clearly that homelessness is a serious challenge for a growing number of Member States and that it is being exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis.

At the same time, there is lots of evidence that effective homelessness policies can successfully tackle the problem and reduce the human, social and economic costs of homelessness. There is furthermore a high level of knowledge about how to develop such policies in Europe. Now is the right time for the European Commission to harness this knowledge and develop a plan to better support and coordinate Member States' in tackling homelessness over the period of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

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

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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.
2. FEANTSA is running a campaign against the criminalisation of homelessness, which is a cruel and ineffective way of tackling homelessness. Find out more at www.povertyisnotacrime.org

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