



## Questionnaire for the FEANTSA Annual Theme 2008 Housing Solutions for People who are homeless

### Some preliminary guidelines:

- The drafting of the national reports needs to be **coordinated by AC members**. The actual drafting can be delegated to somebody else – another person in your organization or a person from another FEANTSA member who is more specialized in the issue. But **all the members of FEANTSA** in your country need to be as much as possible **involved** in the gathering of information and answers to the questions.
- The **deadline** for submitting the reports is **15<sup>th</sup> of June 2008**. There is no upper limit to the size of the reports, but we would expect reports to be at least 10 pages long.
- Please draft your report in **English or French**. If you write it in your own language, you can use the FEANTSA translation fund to cover half of the costs for translation into English (for more info contact [christine.lambert@feantsa.org](mailto:christine.lambert@feantsa.org)).
- All national reports will be made available on the public pages of [FEANTSA's website](#).
- The aim of the national reporting is to provide all members of FEANTSA (and other stakeholders involved in the fight against homelessness) access to information about policies and practices in other countries, which could contribute to the reinforcing of their political/lobbying work and/or their own practices. A general guideline therefore is: **put the information in the report that you would like to get from other countries** and use the questionnaire just as a framework/guideline.
- The questionnaire covers many aspects of housing and housing policy. We would like the **reports to be as complete as possible**, given your limited time and the access to information you have at your disposal (some AC members might have too much information available and will have to prioritize/summarize; other AC members will not have enough information to answer all questions). We do **not expect you to do an impossible job!** The questionnaire should give you an idea of what information we are looking for...

■ European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless AISBL

*Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri AISBL*

194 Chaussée de Louvain ■ 1210 Brussels ■ Belgium ■ Tel.: +32 2 538 66 69 ■ Fax: +32 2 539 41 74 ■ [office@feantsa.org](mailto:office@feantsa.org) ■ [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)



Questionnaire for the FEANTSA Annual Theme 2008  
Housing Solutions for People who are homeless

- Some questions ask for descriptive/objective information and other questions ask for an opinion. The **subjective information will be very useful** – in particular for the analysis of the national reports and the drafting of the European report, and for the wider readership (it helps to put certain policy measure into an understandable context). We understand that it might be difficult (maybe even impossible) to provide subjective information on certain questions because the opinions of FEANTSA members in your country are too different.
  - Some questions are **very technical** and might require a full insight into domestic housing policies to make the answer understandable to a wider readership. In this case, we expect you to summarize the information and present it in a way that it is clear for a European audience. It is useful to illustrate technical answers with best/good practice examples.
  - We tried to be as exhaustive as possible in the questionnaire. As a result, some **questions might be irrelevant** for your country, or they might be overlapping, or you might not have the expertise to answer them. If irrelevant or overlapping, please ignore the questions; if no expertise, please inform us that you do not have the necessary information to answer. But we would like to have some **information on every 9 headings** of the questionnaire.
  - We like to encourage you to provide info on good practice and **statistical information** where possible.
  - When we refer to homelessness, we refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> conceptual categories of FEANTSA **ETHOS definition of homelessness** (rooflessness and houselessness). In the questionnaire there is specific questions related to inadequate and insecure accommodation and how this relates to homelessness in your country.
  - If you have **questions**, please do not hesitate to contact [freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org](mailto:freek.spinnewijn@feantsa.org). We are looking forward to receiving your national reports...
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## Questions:

### 1. Basic questions about housing market

- % social housing of total housing stock (and give brief definition of social housing)
- % rental housing of total stock
- % of sub-standard housing (and give brief definition of sub-standard housing)
- % of overcrowded housing (and give brief definition of overcrowding)
- Housing affordability rate (and give short explanation of how it is measured)
- Other information that might be indicative of the housing situation in your country.

### 2. Public housing policies

- What are the aims/objectives of public housing policy in relation to homelessness (if any)?
- What (statutory) role for public housing policies in preventing and addressing homelessness (if any different from above)?
- Which decision-making level leads on the issue of housing (local, regional, national...)?
- Do housing policy makers have a leading role in addressing and preventing homelessness (in relation to policy development – not service provision!!)? Why (not)?
- What is the % of the public housing budget spent on homelessness (if you include prevention of homelessness, please specify)?

### 3. Access to housing as a trigger/cause of homelessness

- Does housing play an important role in the pathways in and out of homelessness? Please explain?
- Do you know of any evidence that bad/inadequate housing causes homelessness? Please explain.
- Do you have evidence that homelessness increases when the housing market is stressed (or the other way around)? Please explain.
- What are the most important housing related problems that lead to homelessness (if other than the above)?
  - Related to affordability? Please, explain.
  - Related to the quality? Please, explain
  - Related to adequacy of supply? Please, explain
  - Related to insecurity (e.g. anti-social behaviour, tenancy law)? Please. Explain.
- Do you see increase/decrease in the importance of housing as trigger of homelessness? If yes, does this changes the profile of the homeless population?



#### 4. Role of hostel accommodation

- Please explain what is the role (if any) of hostels in the transition process to permanent/independent housing for people who are homeless?
  - Do you believe that hostels are a necessary step towards more independent forms of accommodation for homeless people? Please, explain.
  - It is often argued that many homeless people (who are on the streets or in hostels) are not capable of independent living. Please explain what hostels (can) do to make homeless people *housing ready*?
  - What are the most important obstacles for people to move on from hostel accommodation to more independent housing?
- Can (certain types of) hostel accommodation be a *permanent solution* for certain people who are homeless? Please, explain.
- Do you believe that a *housing first approach* (i.e. provide immediately permanent/independent housing, offer (social) support in this housing and adapt it to the changing needs of the tenant, rather than keep homeless people in temporary accommodation, try to solve their problems through support, and provide independent housing when the person is deemed to be *housing ready*) can work in your country? Why / why not? Please, explain.

#### 5. Home-ownership

- Is repossession due to mortgage default an issue in relation to homelessness in your country?
  - Has homelessness increased recently because of increasing cost of home-ownership and repossession rates?
- Can home-ownership be a sustainable solution for homeless people?
  - Can you give examples of (state-funded or voluntary) schemes that make home-ownership possible for homeless people (co-ownership, incremental home-ownership, self-built...)? Please explain?
- Is extreme poverty amongst home-owners (especially for people without any mortgage duties anymore) an issue in your country?
  - Do you know of housing situations amongst home-owners that would amount to the experiences of homelessness (e.g. ownership of sheds, extreme overcrowding)? Please, explain
  - What State intervention is possible/necessary to improve the situation of home-owners experiencing extreme poverty?
    - (For new member states) Has the transfer of State housing to the tenants after the fall of communist regimes created invisible forms of homelessness (*homeless home-owners*)? Please, explain.
    - It is sometimes argued that slums reappear - especially in large urban areas. Would this be true for your country?
- Why do you think most governments make access to home-ownership a priority of their housing policy and how does that affect the role of public housing policy in relation to homelessness? If this is not the case in your country, how do you explain this?



- Do you think that the right to buy or other forms of promoting home-ownership amongst social housing tenants is a good way of ensuring the necessary fluidity in the social housing stock and increase social housing options for the homeless? Please, explain
  - What effect has the right to buy on access to social housing for homeless people?

## 6. Role of private rental housing market?

- Do you think that the private rental housing sector can be a genuine actor in the provision of decent and affordable housing for homeless people?
  - Do you know of policies aimed at *socialising* the private rental sector for homelessness people? Please, explain how (and why) they work/do not work?
  - What are the most common obstacles to convince private landlords to rent out dwellings to homeless people? How can these obstacles be overcome?
- Do you think rent regulation works to ease housing market pressures and make private rental housing more affordable for very vulnerable groups such as homeless people? Explain why/why not and how it works.
- Do you know of successful policies that aim at reducing vacancy rates and making vacant housing available for homeless people?
  - Do you know of policies aimed at specific landlords with substantial amounts of vacant housing such as shops, the church...?
  - Do you know of effective policy measures to stop speculation in housing?
- Is very inadequate/substandard housing in the private rental market a big problem in your country?
  - Do you know of housing situations (both related to physical standards, bad housing management practice, and housing insecurity) in the private rental market that amount to the experience of homelessness? Please, explain.
  - What public intervention/regulation exists to stop very inadequate housing by slum landlords?
- Are homeless people put into cheap hotel accommodation because of lack of other alternatives?
  - Why?
  - What is the cost (annual cost per country or indication thereof)?
  - What public measures are taken to reduce the use of hotel accommodation?
- Is squatting considered to be an issue related to homelessness? Please, explain.

## 7. Role of social/public housing

*(Make difference between both if necessary)*

- How is social housing defined in your country and what are the statutory aims?
- What role does the social housing sector play in addressing and preventing homelessness?



- Do social housing landlords have a statutory obligation to house homeless people? If yes, please explain?
- Are you aware of any other policies that help/incite social housing landlords to provide housing to homeless people?
- What are the most commonly used arguments for social housing landlords to house/not to house homeless people? Do you agree with these arguments?
- Do you think the social housing stock is large enough to allow social housing landlords to play an effective role in addressing and preventing homelessness? If not, what happens with homeless people during the time more social housing is made available?
- Does the funding regime help/complicate social housing operators to focus on homeless people?
- On what basis is social housing allocated to the tenants? Do the selection criteria favour/obstruct access to housing for homeless people?
  - Please provide details of the share of the different income groups in social housing – in particular the share of people in the 2 lowest income deciles.
  - Do you agree that social housing should be allocated primarily on the basis of the urgency of housing exclusion – even if that would jeopardise social mix in the social housing stock? Please, explain.
  - Are there any conditions in relation to the place of residence to access social housing? Is this relevant to homelessness. Please, explain?
- Are you aware of any structural cooperation between the homelessness sector and social housing providers? If yes, can you explain how the cooperation is organised (voluntary or statutory basis) and give examples of good practices.
- Do you agree that mixing housing tenures and social & ethnic groups is a precondition for building sustainable communities? Please, explain.
  - How can one solve the tension between building socially mixed communities and providing housing for the most excluded?
  - Are you aware of sustainable poor housing communities?
- What are the main obstacles in your country to construct more social housing? How can they be overcome?

## 8. Prevention of homelessness

- What are the main interventions in the housing area aimed at preventing homelessness? Please, explain. (summarise if necessary)
- Is eviction an important issue in relation to homelessness? Why/why not – please, explain
  - % of people evicted who become homeless?
- What are the main reasons for people being evicted?
- What public intervention exists to prevent eviction?
  - Do you have evidence that this intervention reduced the number of people who are homeless?
  - Please, explain the importance of housing allowances as a tool for prevention of homelessness? Is it cost-effective? Does it reach homeless people?
- Is housing advice an effective way to prevent/address homelessness?
  - What kind of housing advice do people need?



- How should it be provided?
- Is intervening in the housing market a cost-effective way to prevent homelessness? Please, explain.

## 9. The Right to Housing

- Is the right to housing enshrined in the constitution and/or legislation of your country? If not, why?
- Is the right to housing justiciable (can it be invoked through legal proceedings)?
  - For whom (what category of the population)?
  - How?
  - Is it effective? Why/why not (implementation problems...)?
- Are you aware of any land-mark cases (case-law) related to the right to housing?
- Do you believe that making the right to housing justiciable is the right approach to combating and preventing homelessness? Why (not)?
- Is the discrimination in access to housing (social/private rental/homeownership) an issues in relation to homelessness? If yes, for whom and why?

## 10. Immigration

It might be useful (depending on the situation in your country...) to provide some information on the impact of migration on the housing market and on the housing situation of immigrants (in as much as it amounts to the experience of homelessness). An issue of particular concern could be the rights of EU migrants (in particular of migrants from the new EU member states to the old EU-15) to housing and hostel accommodation.

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