

Editorial

The idea for this magazine was born during a seminar held at the FEANTSA Forum in Athens in May 2025. During this session, Gill Taylor (*Museum of Homelessness, UK*) and Adèle Lenormand (*Collectif Les Morts de la Rue, France*) presented their work and methodologies for *Breaking the cycle of invisibility and for honouring people who died homeless*. From the gathering of information to restore names and identities to those who died while homeless, to the organisation of memorial events, their contributions highlighted practices that are both rigorous and deeply human.

Beyond methods and tools, the discussion opened a more intimate space. It spoke to the bonds that professionals build with the people they support, sometimes over many years, and to the sense of rupture and grief that can accompany their death. Anyone who has worked in services supporting people experiencing homelessness has, at some point, been confronted with death. This inevitably raises questions about how practitioners themselves are supported through loss, as well as how other service users are affected. It also calls into question the processes that exist - or are missing - to allow grief and remembrance to be expressed within professional settings.

This seminar shed light on the unique emotional intensity of social and care professions, and on words that are often thought to have no place in this field - among them, love. In the room, around fifteen people were present. At the end of the session, a professional stayed behind to continue the conversation with Gill and Adèle. She suddenly broke down in tears. This moment - suspended in the middle of a succession of presentations and seminars - allowed some to lay down, if only briefly, part of the weight of sadness that does not always find space to be expressed in everyday professional life.

From this experience emerged the desire to extend the reflection and give it a European scope, while remaining firmly grounded in practice. While some countries are able to present consolidated national figures on deaths among people experiencing homelessness - such as [France](#), the [UK](#), the [Czech Republic](#), [Ireland](#) and [Italy](#) - such data does not exist everywhere, and even less so at a European level. What we do know, however, is that people who experience homelessness die younger, particularly those with long histories of living on the streets. We know that life on the streets wears people down; it is exhausting and destructive to both physical and mental health.

Today in Europe, it is still possible to die without a name, without loved ones being informed, and without a dignified funeral being organised.

To better understand this reality, we draw on the reflections developed by SMES - Santé Mentale et Exclusion Sociale in their publication [SMES-03 \(2021\)](#), which

invites us to understand the death of people experiencing homelessness not as a single moment in time, but as a continuum extending before, during, and after death.

From this perspective, the death of a person experiencing homelessness is not an isolated event, but a process that mobilises multiple dimensions of practice and experience:

- **Before death:** long trajectories of hardship, care, disengagement or fragmented care pathways, and repeated interactions with services
- **At the moment of death:** often occurring in conditions of invisibility, urgency, or within care and support settings
- **After death:** processes of identification, post-mortem care, administrative procedures, and acts of dignity and remembrance
- **For professionals:** emotional impact, moral distress, grief, and the need for spaces to reflect and process loss
- **For systems and services:** questions of responsibility, coordination, recognition, and learning from each death

In light of these realities, this edition of *Homeless in Europe* is dedicated to this theme, complementing the 2018 issue on mortality, which focused primarily on prevention and end-of-life support. This time, we acknowledge that people are dying within services, and we focus on how this reality is being met with dignity, remembrance, and post-mortem care, as well as the support offered to those who remain.

This edition also follows a somewhat new methodology. A voluntary collective, facilitated by FEANTSA, came together around this issue and gradually took shape as an editorial committee, bringing together perspectives, experiences and practices from across Europe. This is how Gill, Adèle, Magdalena, Florence, Caterina, Floriana, Guillem, Silvia, and myself worked together to bring you this new edition of *Homeless in Europe* Magazine.

In these pages, you will find articles exploring developments in funeral support in Paris, reflections on how local data collection initiatives in Italy have evolved into a national network, and a feature on the “Breathing Room”, a project for practitioners, emphasising the importance of having dedicated space to process loss.

Editorial

All contributions are firmly rooted in practice, with many more articles to discover throughout this magazine.

The working group closes this edition with a short set of recommendations aimed at improving both practice and policy in the recognition, acknowledgement, and honouring of deaths among people experiencing homelessness.

To move beyond simply discussing how things are done to actually doing them, this edition also includes two pages dedicated to testimonies and memories from professionals who have lost someone they were supporting, collected during the FEANTSA Forum 2026 in Warsaw. Without the need or the desire to be fully understood, they have left a trace: a memory, a few words, a gesture of remembrance for someone they accompanied, and who is no longer here.



By **Arnaud Vernus**, Media and Publications Officer, FEANTSA