



## FEANTSA NEWS

### Research Conference: Registration Deadline 10th September

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Registration is now open for the 10th European Research Conference on Homelessness, 'Families, Housing and Homelessness', taking place on the 25th September in Dublin, Ireland. Registration closes on the 10th September. To tweet about the conference, use the hashtag #eohconfdublin.

### European Journal of Homelessness: Volume 9, Issue 1

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The European Observatory on Homelessness is pleased to announce that The European Journal of Homelessness: Volume 9, Issue 1, Homelessness in Times of Crisis is now available online and in print. Print copies cost €20. To order a printed copy contact [information@feantsa.org](mailto:information@feantsa.org).

### Homeless in Europe Magazine on Homelessness Strategies

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The Summer 2015 edition of "Homeless in Europe" magazine - 'Achieving Goals: Strategies to End Homelessness' - is now available.

### Paris Declaration in Welsh and Slovenian

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The Paris Declaration is now available in Welsh, thanks to translation by Shelter Cymru and in Slovenian, thanks to Kings of the Street.

### Housing First Guide Filming

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FEANTSA went to Newcastle, Glasgow, Paris Madrid, and Utrecht this month and last month to film Housing First services. The film crew will travel to Helsinki at the end of August as well. The videos will be available on the Housing First Guide Europe website as part of the online Guide, together with six different written chapters of the Guide and other materials. It is hoped that there will be a final English version of the Guide by the end of 2015. The Housing First Guide Europe will provide high quality resources on the nature, key principles, operational experience and limits of Housing First.

### Youth Homelessness Study Session in Partnership with ILGYO

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FEANTSA and ILGYO are holding a study session on LGBTQ youth homelessness, which will take place at the European Youth Centre, Budapest, Hungary, from 25th October to 31st October 2015. The deadline for applications is the 3rd August.

## UN NEWS

### UN Special Rapporteur Official Visit to Serbia and Kosovo

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From May 16th-28th, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, conducted an official mission to Serbia and Kosovo. Regarding Serbia, the Rapporteur [noted](#) that there are laws based on human rights in theory, international actors and donors are active in implementing housing programmes and the Serbian government has established a social housing strategy, but the country could soon be facing a housing crisis as housing needs outstrip available programmes.

The Rapporteur expressed concern that the deep gap between law and its implementation renders housing inadequate for the most vulnerable groups in [Kosovo](#), particularly women, internally displaced persons, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities. The Special Rapporteur was struck by the inequality women face in Kosovo in relation to inheritance, housing, and property, all essential for the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing.

### UN Asks for Explanations About Evictions in Spain

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Mohamed Ben Djazia, a political refugee, and his two young children were [evicted from their home and had to live in a car](#), even though Mr Ben Djazia had asked for the social housing, the United Nations has heard. The UN has asked the Spanish government why this and other similar cases can occur in Spain.

## EUROPE NEWS

### Luxembourg Presidency

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[Luxembourg took over the presidency](#) of the Council of the European Union on 1st July. The [Luxembourg Presidency priorities](#) include a "triple-A Europe on social issues", unemployment and migration.

### Social Platform Letter to Heads of State on Greece

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Social Platform, of which FEANTSA is a member, has sent a [letter](#) to EU Heads of State and Government, the Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, President of the Eurogroup, Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank and Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund on the situation in Greece, highlighting that "Social Europe hangs in the balance".

### ECHR Judgement on Rights of Asylum Seekers in Belgium

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In a recent [decision](#) on the treatment of a group of asylum seekers in Belgium, the European Court of Human Rights judged that the Belgian State had "not taken due account of the vulnerability of claimants as asylum seekers" and that "despite there being exceptional circumstances because of the crisis", "the Belgian authorities should be regarded as having failed to fulfil their obligation not to expose claimants to conditions of extreme deprivation", "having left them in the street, without access to toilets or showers and with no way to fulfil their basic needs". The Court believes that "such living conditions, combined with the lack of reason to believe that their situation would improve" are as bad as those set down in Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), that states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," and therefore constitutes degrading treatment.

## OECD Focus on Homelessness and Housing

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In its July report, [Integrating Social Services for Vulnerable Groups: Bridging Sectors for Better Service Delivery](#), the OECD focuses on "Homelessness, The Homeless and Integrated Social Services", observing that "Models that provide housing first and then integrate health and social care support are effective treatments for chronic homelessness", "nearly one third of OECD countries have committed to integrating social services for the homeless in an official national strategy", and "cooperation between sectors is important".

## MEMBER NEWS

### France: Emergency Shelter Hotline – Annual Report

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The results of the 2014 annual report on the operation of the emergency hotline for homeless people asking for shelter show that the number of people asking for help has been increasing for the past two years. 4% more people asked for emergency accommodation in the 37 French *départements* surveyed.

Single males are still the largest group but [FNARS has observed](#) increasing requests coming from families with children (16% more since 2012; families made up 39% of callers in 2014), single women (12% more than in 2012) and the working poor (10% of callers are in employment).

Children are becoming more vulnerable: the parents of 20,600 minors called the hotline this year, which means the phenomenon is increasing – it is up 18% on 2012.

### Ireland: Snapshot Study on Rent Supplement Limits and Market Rents

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Simon Communities' snapshot study: ['Locked Out of the Market: The Gap between Rent Supplement/HAP Limits and Market Rents'](#) looks at the current state of Ireland's rental market and its effects on Ireland's most vulnerable people. The study puts in perspective the growing gap between rising market rents and the Rent Supplement / Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits in the country, which have remained unchanged since June 2013. By tracking the number of properties available to rent within these state support limits in ten regions throughout the country, the study shows how far these payments are from the market, which is contributing to a homelessness crisis that currently sees 3,143 adults in emergency homeless accommodation nationally, and 1,118 children, say Simon Communities.

### Ireland: Families Sleeping Rough in Dublin Have Doubled

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Focus Ireland [reports](#) that of the 71 homeless families referred to its services in April, 63 were first-time homeless. The charity warned they had seen the number of families made homeless double twice in the last two years. Focus Ireland has called on Local Government Minister Alan Kelly to issue an urgent ministerial directive to local authorities, asking them to provide suitable emergency accommodation to any family facing homelessness.

### Ireland: Simon Communities React to Rising Homelessness Figures

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The Simon Communities in Ireland have [warned](#) that the homeless and housing crisis is spiralling even further out of control following recent figures published on emergency accommodation figures from May 2015. The report shows that in the first five months of this year the number of adults in emergency accommodation increased by 154 with families increasing by 41% from 401 to 565, while the number of children in emergency accommodation rose by 346, representing a 40% increase.

### Italy: Extreme Poverty in Italy – Interview with Cristina Avonto, fio.PSD

## President

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Cristina Avonto, President of fio.PSD, reacted to figures on extreme poverty in Italy in a recent [interview](#), in which she highlights the lack of systematic national planning to deal with combatting poverty and social exclusion from a welfare point of view rather than an emergency one.

## Italy: Housing First Summer School Report

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The 2015 [Summer School](#) run by the Housing First Italy Network and fio.PSD was a [success](#). It was attended by 87 people from all over Italy from cities, NGOs and universities. The participants discussed and compared experiences of the implementation of this social experimentation, which is gaining recognition as the new model of services fighting social exclusion in Italy and in Europe.

## Spain: The Consequences of Denying Healthcare

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Red Acoge has [published](#) a report on the consequences of law 16/2012 excluding migrants from health services. The law has meant that more than 800,000 people have been denied healthcare, says the report.

## UK: Housing Benefit Cut for 18 to 21s Could Mean Disaster for Thousands

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The UK Government has recently announced plans to restrict housing benefit for 18-21 year-olds. Crisis has [reacted](#) to the plans, saying that they could "spell disaster for thousands of young people who cannot live with their parents. At an age when other young people are leaving home to travel, work or study, growing numbers could be facing homelessness and the terrifying prospect of roughing it on the streets."

## UK: Tackling Homelessness Early Could Save Money

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Tackling homelessness early could save taxpayers between £3,000 and £18,000 for every person helped, [according to new research](#) from Crisis. [The Financial Costs of Single Homelessness in the UK](#) makes the economic case for helping homeless people at an early stage. It warns that unless people get the help they need, they can quickly become vulnerable to mental and physical health problems, violent crime and problems with drugs and alcohol. As a consequence, they can become much harder to help and are more likely to need costly public services such as emergency hospitalization, hospital treatment and psychiatric support. Conversely, tackling homelessness early enables people to succeed in their lives and to contribute to society and the economy.

## HEADLINES

### Belgium: 'Step Forward' Housing First Project for 18-25-Year-Olds

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Brussels Social Services and Samusocial Brussels have begun a new kind of Housing First project, targeting 18 to 25-year-olds experiencing homelessness and acute vulnerability (regarding mental health and/or substance use).

The project will run from now until March 2016 and will provide housing and the offer of multidisciplinary support to 20 young people.

### Belgium: Evaluation of Housing First Measures With a View to Extending the

## Project

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A public-private partnership has begun an evaluation of the [Belgian Housing First project](#) (Brussels projects and national measures). The social experimentation programme provides immediate access to housing to people living on the street who have multiple problems or even a dual diagnosis (chronic homelessness, substance misuse issues and/or problems related to mental health). A multidisciplinary support team aims to keep people in their housing and allow for their recovery. Early results are promising and have meant that the experimentation has been extended (8 cities are currently involved for a 3-year period of analysis). After 22 months, 95% of participants are still in housing. 120 people have been housed with support so far. The project aims to house 150 people by June 2016. 350 people are being monitored as part of the study – the target group and a control group of homeless people receiving traditional services. A closing conference will take place in June 2016 in Brussels.

## Belgium: Flemish Poverty Reduction Action Plan 2015-2019

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The Flemish government has approved a [poverty reduction plan for 2015-2019](#). The main priority is the reduction of child poverty by 30% by 2020.

The Flemish government chose a global approach to homelessness (see p.53), based on the 5 strategic goals put forward by FEANTSA in its [Ending Homelessness campaign](#).

Combating homelessness will involve cooperation between different stakeholders at different policy levels. The Flemish government will give priority to the prevention of homelessness, such as preventing evictions and support for people leaving institutions.

The latest homelessness count (2014) showed that there are 5458 homeless people in the Flemish region.

FEANTSA member Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk will offer its expertise to make this plan operational and effective.

## Ireland: Dublin City Council Facing Shortfall for Homelessness Services

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Dublin City Council in Ireland is facing a "serious budgetary deficit" of €18.5m due to the escalating cost of homelessness services, says a report, which has charted a rise of almost 50% in the number of people sleeping rough in Dublin since April this year. The city council has now decided to release contingency funds of €5.1m to try and ease the cash flow problem. Other local authorities will be asked to provide around €2m to the fund.

## Ireland: €60m for New Social Housing to Combat Crisis

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More than €60m is to be spent on social housing in a plan to provide accommodation for elderly, disabled and homeless people in Ireland. Irish Environment Minister Alan Kelly pledged that the investment will have a significant impact on the housing crisis in the "short term". Under the plan, 344 additional units will be added to Dublin social housing stock by the end of 2017 through a combination of acquisitions and new-builds by the four local authorities in conjunction with a number of housing organisations. FEANTSA member Simon Communities has [welcomed](#) the move.

## Italy: Istat Report on Poverty in Italy

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This [Report](#) disseminates estimates on poverty rates in Italy, based on the renewed Household Budget Survey. In 2014, the absolute poverty incidence was equal to 5.7%, whereas the relative poverty incidence was 10.3%. Absolute and the relative poverty rates remained stable (respectively 6.3% and 10.4% in 2013) in all geographical areas: 4.2% and 4.9% in the North, 4.8% and 6.3% in the Centre, 8.6% and 21.1% in the South and Islands areas. The relative poverty threshold for two-person households was equal to €1,041.91 (about €10 less than the 2013 threshold). Absolute poverty decreased among households in which all members were nationals (from 5.1% to 4.3%) and households living in the small municipalities in the South and on the Islands (from 12.1% to 9.2%).

## Spain: State Ombudsman Makes Recommendations on "Public Security Law"

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The Spanish Ombudsman has made recommendations to the State Secretary for Security, the Interior Department of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Security Department of the Basque Government and the Department for Presidency, Justice and Internal Affairs of the Comunidad Foral de Navarra, regarding the overarching "law to protect Citizen Security", which came into force on the 1st July and has been widely contested by civil rights groups, including FEANTSA members. The [recommendations](#) refer to full body searches, the exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of assembly and the exercise of the fundamental right to information.

## UK: Prevention Credited with Reducing Edinburgh Homelessness

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Edinburgh has a smaller proportion of rough sleepers than any other city in Scotland, according to [new figures released by the Scottish Government](#). Local authority figures have credited a successful partnership with third sector organisations and a focus on prevention for reducing homelessness in the capital by 15% over the past five years. The council's early intervention approach has seen commissioned services help over 7,500 people to find new homes as quickly as possible and provide support to help them keep their homes.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Homeless Patients in Intensive Care Units

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This [research](#) aimed to describe epidemiology and outcome of critically ill homeless patients, as compared with those of non-homeless patients. It concluded that critically ill homeless patients benefit from the same level of care and have globally the same prognosis than housed patients but experience longer lengths of stay. Most precarious patients living on the street have a higher mortality rate. The study perspective concerns not only Intensive Care Units but also the global organization of healthcare, since homeless patients are referred by numerous sources and discharged to different wards.

### Measuring Numbers of Young Homeless People

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The lack of coherent national data on homelessness makes measuring the true scale of youth homelessness in the UK a real challenge. This presents a challenge for those trying to end homelessness and for government to ensure effective allocation of funding so that young people receive the support they need. Most data currently collected by governments across the UK relate to the statutory homeless; those found eligible for help under the Main Homelessness Duty. However, this provides only a limited picture of the scale of homelessness. Centrepoint commissioned the University of Cambridge to [carry out research to produce an up-to-date estimate of the number of young people aged 16 to 24 experiencing homelessness](#) during the course of a year. The study draws on official figures in conjunction with examinations of 40 local authorities and a national poll of more than 2,000 16- to 25-year-olds and finds the numbers of young people being accommodated by local authorities or homeless services across the UK to be over three times higher than those recorded by the Government, highlighting the 'hidden homelessness' of those forced to sleep on sofas of friends or relatives as they have nowhere else to stay. The research shows that 26% of young people have had to sleep in an "unsafe place" due to homelessness.

### Homelessness Interventions for Families

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The first large-scale experiment into the effectiveness of homelessness interventions for families in the USA, the [Family Options Study](#), is a three-year-long evaluation of three types of ways to help homeless families. It looks at 12 communities throughout a variety of U.S. cities and involves 2,300 homeless families. The interim findings suggest some solutions for reducing homelessness and improving the lives of low-income families. The report states that housing vouchers have been a more effective means of reducing homelessness than rapid re-housing but noted that there is an identical principal behind both interventions: housing first, social services later.

## Safety of Homeless People Leaving Hospital

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HealthWatch England recently launched [Safely Home](#), a report on a national inquiry into [what happens when people are discharged from hospital and care settings](#). The inquiry focused on three patient groups: people with mental health problems, older people, and people experiencing homelessness.

## Long-Term Outcomes of Resettlement

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The FOR-HOME [study](#), "Rebuilding lives: longer-term outcomes for homeless people who are resettled: summary of findings and implications for practice: pre-review version" was undertaken in 2007-10 to investigate the outcomes of the resettlement of single homeless people. The study involved 400 of their clients who were resettled into independent accommodation. Resettlement is a more intense process than rehousing, and involves preparation for moving, assisting with the move, and arranging support if needed once rehoused.

## Housing in Brussels: Do Homeless People Have Access to It?

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The proceedings of the recent conference organised by Belgian FEANTSA member AMA, "Housing in Brussels: Do Homeless People Have Access to It?" are available as a [downloadable publication](#).

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For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

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