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FEANTSA STATEMENT
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6 April 2021

In defense of Szabolcs street hospital

FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) was shocked to learn that the Hungarian Government could close the health centre of the Budapest Methodological Social Centre (BMSZKI) in Szabolcs Street.

We find it unacceptable that, during the pandemic, when homeless people are among the groups most at risk from COVID, for whom the 'stay at home' call is meaningless, an institution vital to them may be at risk.

The Hungarian Government has an obligation under international human rights law to ensure the right to health for all. Homeless people face a number of barriers in accessing health care, so this dedicated health care centre provides a life-saving service for them.

Szabolcs Street is an indispensable institution. FEANTSA's health working group has visited the site and has found that the institution provides quality care for homeless people. Members of the health working group who are experts in health and homelessness from various European countries have specifically emphasised the institution's critical role in ensuring convalescent care for homeless patients when they are discharged from hospital; without the institution, they could find themselves on the streets right away.

FEANTSA calls on the Hungarian Government to ensure that the hospital can continue its vital work.