



FEANTSA FLASH
April 2008

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For upcoming events and conferences, do not forget to visit the FEANTSA [Calendar of events!](#)

FEANTSA News

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- ▶ **FEANTSA Call for Papers – European Research Conference ‘Good Governance: the key to effective homelessness policies’, The Hague, 19 September 2008**[4/30/2008]

Governance is an important focus of current research into homelessness. This conference, organised in conjunction with UMC St Radboud and Federatie Opgang, will be a unique opportunity for transnational exchange and networking on the theme of governance, and more specifically on the following 4 sub-themes:

- Good governance in service provision
- Participation of people who are homeless
- Prevention of homelessness
- Role of public policy

There will be workshops on the above 4 themes where researchers will be able to present their papers. Abstracts should be sent to the chairs of the organising committee William Edgar (w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk) and Judith Wolf (J.Wolf@sg.umcn.nl) by the 30th of June.

For more information please contact Willam Edgar or Judith Wolf for research related questions and Christine Lambert (Christine.lambert@feantsa.org) for organisational questions.

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- ▶ **FEANTSA Website Survey**[4/30/2008]

Please take a moment to fill in the FEANTSA website survey, to help us further improve the layout and content of our website.

Please find the website survey [here](#).

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- ▶ **Reminder: European seminar on “Strategies to end homelessness”**[4/30/2008]

There are only a few weeks left to register for the European seminar "Strategies to end homelessness: Elements of conflict and cooperation at local level." The deadline for registrations is **Friday 16 May**.

This seminar is co-organised by FEANTSA and the Committee of the Regions, with the participation of European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Vladimir Spidla, and First Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions, Michel Delebarre. Speakers at this seminar will consider some of the obstacles to /success factors for ending homelessness, which ties in with the demands of the European Parliament Written Declaration on ending street homelessness ([EN](#)) adopted on 10 April 2008.

For information, programme, registration, please consult the [FEANTSA website](#).

▶ **Toolkit for developing an integrated homeless strategy**[4/30/2008]

FEANTSA's toolkit for developing integrated homeless strategies is now available in at least four languages on the FEANTSA website: English, French, Polish and Italian. If versions exist in other languages, please send them to the FEANTSA secretariat, liz.gosme@feantsa.org, so they can be posted on the FEANTSA website.

See toolkit on [FEANTSA website](#).

News from the European Union

▶ **European Commission: New Health Commissioner Speaks at European Alcohol and Health Forum**[4/30/2008]

The European Commission recently organised the Second Plenary meeting of the Alcohol and Health Forum and the First Meeting of the Open (Alcohol) Forum. The newly appointed Health Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou, welcomed the commitments made by the different stakeholders to curb alcohol abuse and promised to follow their implementation in 2009.

Alcohol is one of the key health problems faced by the EU. In fact, Europe is the continent that has the highest alcohol consumption per capita in the world. In October 2006, DG Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission adopted a comprehensive strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm. In this context, an Alcohol and Health Forum was launched in June 2007. It is a platform composed of relevant participants, including stakeholder organisations, industry, Member States and other EU institution representatives. Members of the Forum must take action to reduce alcohol related harm with the resources at their disposal. Membership entails making a measurable commitment to this end. FEANTSA is a member of the Forum.

For more details, please see the European Commission [press release](#).

▶ **European Parliament: Written Declaration on Ending Street Homelessness Adopted**[4/30/2008]

Earlier this month, the only-elected body of the European Union adopted the Written Declaration on ending street homelessness 111/2007. On average only one in ten written declarations obtain the required majority of signatures. The support of Members of the European Parliament (MEP's) in favour of this initiative should therefore be seen as a strong signal of political consensus on the urgent need to address street homelessness across the European Union.

438 MEP's from all EU Member States and all political groups signed the Declaration, which:

- Calls on the Council to agree on an EU-wide commitment to end street homelessness by 2015,
- Calls on the Commission to develop a European framework definition of homelessness, gather comparable and reliable statistical data, and provide annual updates on action taken and progress made in EU Member States towards ending homelessness and
- Urges Member States to devise "winter emergency plans" as part of a wider homelessness strategy.

FEANTSA and its members are delighted with the adoption of the Declaration and believe that this is an important step in the fight against homelessness, giving renewed impetus for follow up initiatives. In a press conference held on 22 April 2008 in Strasbourg, the MEP's who launched the cross-party Written Declaration and FEANTSA stated that they were determined to ensure that it is followed by concrete steps, at all levels. It is now time for action.

Further information can be found [here](#).

▶ **MPHASIS Website Now Accessible**[4/30/2008]

The [MPHASIS website](#) is now up and running, and contains the following sections: Project Co-ordination, National Co-ordination, Research, MPHASIS Documents, EU Social Inclusion process, and Partners (password protected area). The national MPHASIS meetings will take place between June 2008 and June 2009, with the first national MPHASIS meeting taking place in Norway on 13 June 2008.

▶ **Network to Examine Child Poverty Launched**[4/30/2008]

A European network that aims to tackle child poverty in cities was launched earlier this month. Funded to 80% by the European Commission under the PROGRESS programme, the network will have 895 000 Euro at its disposal.

European Cities Against Child Poverty (ECACP) will conduct a two-year project to collate and compare initiatives that have been successful in cutting child poverty in countries such as Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. Key areas on which information will be collated are: the impact of homelessness and poor housing on children; access to work and training for parents; education to improve children's life chances and break cycles of deprivation; and the health and social case for improving children's life chances.

The research will be used to produce a how-to guide and provide examples of best practice from across the EU that other cities can emulate in their local strategies.

The network will be led by Greater London Enterprise (GLE), an economic development company owned by the 33 London boroughs. It will work with umbrella group London Councils, London Development Agency, and partners from ten European cities including Milan, Amsterdam, Helsinki and Budapest.

► **Responses to second European Commission consultation on Active Inclusion: now online** [4/30/2008]

All responses to the Commission second stage 'Active inclusion' consultation are now online, and provide different perspectives on active inclusion (on the interpretation of the concept, the implementation of active inclusion strategies at local level, the different pillars of active inclusion, etc). These include responses from European and national NGOs (including FEANTSA's response), European social partners, and national/regional/local public authorities.

See more on the European Commission [website](#).

News from our Members

► **Italy: First Census Reveals 5000 are Homeless in Milan** [4/30/2008]

The first ever census of people who are roof- and house-less in Milan shows that there are almost 5000 people who are homeless in the Milan metropolitan area. At least 400 people live and sleep rough, while 1.152 live in emergency shelters and reception centres, and an additional 3.300 live in slum like neighbourhoods and Roma settlements. 90% of those sleeping rough do so in open spaces around the Milan Dome, near the Central railway stations and Linate airport.

The data was collected on 14 January 2008, when 250 volunteers and 70 vehicles were sent around the city during the night to monitor the situation. A questionnaire was also distributed in order to gather qualitative data, which was answered by about one third of the homeless population. It shows that 90% of the homeless are male, aged on average 48. More than 50% of people who live rough are Italian, while those who are foreign born are Moroccan, Algerian, South American and Romanian. Usually, the youngest are of foreign origin. 50% of the respondents said they were single, and 30% widowers. As for the reasons why they were faced with their current situation, 25% of them mentioned the loss of employment, 17% problems related to family relationships, and 13% free choice.

This survey is the first of a series which will be held on a national basis following an agreement between FEANTSA Italian member FIOpsd and ISTAT, the Italian national institute of statistics. The results will be available in October 2008.

Following the adoption of the European Parliament Written Declaration on Ending Street Homelessness, the organisation Caritas Ambrosiana has called for measures to be taken in Milan, especially as this is the city hosting the 2015 Universal Expo.

► **Portugal: AMI Issues its 2007 report on Social Action** [4/30/2008]

The AMI Social Action 2007 report is now available. Among its findings it notes that the main reasons for referral to AMI's services are financial precariousness and unemployment, and that almost a quarter of their homeless clients are female. For the full report please look under Reports at this [link](#).

► **WALES: Shelter Cymru offer Women and Homelessness Award**[4/30/2008]

Shelter Cymru are inviting applications for the fifth Val Feld Women & Homelessness Award. The annual award was established in 2003 to remember and recognize the contribution made by Shelter Cymru's first Director Val Feld and her tireless contribution to housing, and in particular her promotion of women's involvement in housing at all levels.

Says Michelle Wales, "We (the panel) are looking forward to adjudicating this year and seeing what innovation and new ways of responding to the issues surrounding women, housing and homelessness are out there."

The winner will receive a cash prize of £2,000. Application forms and full criteria of the award are available to download at <http://www.sheltercymru.org.uk/>.

► **Wales: Shelter welcomes 6% drop in homelessness**[4/30/2008]

SHELTER Cymru, Wales' leading housing and homeless charity, recently welcomed the drop in the statutory homeless figures announced by the Welsh Assembly Government. Statistics released in April show a 6% drop in the number of households accepted as homeless on the previous quarter and that the numbers were 1% lower than the same quarter last year.

Janet Loudon, head of operations housing services from Shelter Cymru, welcomed the drop in number of homeless households, but said: "We mustn't forget these new statistics are only a snapshot of the whole situation. Local authorities have many more people coming through their doors than is indicated in these figures". She adds "As the Assembly Government develops its 10-year plan to tackle homelessness, we will be pushing for an expansion in the help that is available to people facing homelessness."

The Homelessness figures are available [here](#).

Homelessness in the Headlines

► Austria: "Mobilpass" Facilitates Mobility for Minimum Income Recipients in Vienna [4/30/2008]

Since the beginning of April, citizens of Vienna who are on minimum income or a minimum pension can obtain a "Mobilpass". With this pass, they have the possibility of buying cheaper monthly passes and half-price single tickets for all public transport.

Walter Kiss, director of Volkshilfe Wien, a social service provider, highlighted that more and more clients face financial difficulties and once they have paid their rent and energy bills, simply do not have the means to afford public transport. He stressed that for a meaningful participation in a city like Vienna, mobility is vital.

► Belgium: Church Makes Empty Buildings Available to the Poor [4/30/2008]

The Catholic Church in Brussels has pledged to renovate a number of dilapidated church properties in order to provide housing for the poor and homeless.

The church currently rents out 27 church properties to a total of 60 disadvantaged families, via a social housing association. It now aims to transform some 380 properties into social housing, on the condition that it finds the necessary funding. The move follows a call by Cardinal Danneels in 2006 to make more church properties available to those without a roof over their heads.

The Flemish Housing Minister, Marino Keulen, confirmed last week how important it is for the church to rethink its policy on how it should use its cultural heritage. Says Annemie Luyten, responsible for the Catholic Pastoral Care in Antwerp, "church buildings have always had a social function. Rent and building costs are so high that for a growing number of poor people, it is becoming impossible to find a house. As a church community we have an obligation to do something."

► France: Code of Ethics Created for Outreach Work [4/30/2008]

A code of ethics, based on the collective experiences of associations that do outreach work with homeless people, has been created in France. The charter lays out several principles, such as respecting others in their difference, and respecting other's choices, as well as their refusal of choices. It also stipulates that the person being helped must demonstrate that he/she accepts to be helped. This code of ethics fills a need within associations and their teams to create certain ethical principles for outreach work, which is becoming more and more common.

If you'd like to make a comment on this idea, please email ethique.maraude@sls.aphp.fr

For more information, please go to <http://www.espace-ethique.org/>.

► France: New Government Postition Created to Deal with Homelessness [4/30/2008]

Alain Régnier has recently been appointed as France's new 'préfet' (local representative of central authority) for the co-ordination of housing, and access to housing for people who are homeless or living in unfit housing. Reporting directly to the Prime Minister, his responsibilities include developing prevention measures, helping people get off the streets as soon as possible, and implementing the DALO law (the enforceable right to housing), which gives France's most vulnerable citizens the right to claim housing.

For more information, please contact Stéphanie, webmaster@feantsa.org

► Germany: Medical Centre for People who are Homeless Receives Award [4/30/2008]

An award has been given to the medical and dental clinics of the "MUT Gesellschaft für Gesundheit mbH" (MUT Society for Health mbH) in Berlin, that have been offering medical treatment to people who are homeless since 1994. In two city locations, doctors, dentists, social workers and volunteers have been working together to cater for the needs of the approximately 9.000 people who are homeless in Berlin. In total there have been 75.000 general medical consultations and 12.000 dental ones.

The project has served as a model for similar initiatives in Germany and recently received the award as a "Selected Place 2008" (Ausgewählte Orte 2008) of the Deutsche Bank and the initiative "Germany – Country of Ideas" (Deutschland – Land der Ideen).

► **Romania: Homeless Removed from Streets of Bucharest for NATO Summit**[4/30/2008]

The 20th NATO Summit held in Bucharest 2-4 April was the largest international event Romania has ever hosted. In preparing the city for the arrival of 26 heads of government and dozens of high-level officials, Romanian police reportedly forced dozens of homeless people away from Bucharest.

Christian Ciocan, spokesman for the Bucharest police says "we evicted 37 persons (living by) the sewers along the route used by the NATO delegations." Although the police claims to have offered these homeless people a bath, fresh clothes and a meal, there are reports that they were taken to a field outside of Bucharest and left there.

► **Spain: Results from census on rough sleepers in Barcelona and Madrid revealed**[4/30/2008]

The city councils of Barcelona and Madrid have revealed the results of their city-wide census on the number of people sleeping rough, conducted in the beginning of March. In Madrid, 1.444 people were found to be homeless - 651 were sleeping on the street while 893 were sleeping in hostels. On average they were predominantly male, around 40 years old and single. The vast majority were homeless due to unemployment and family problems. Almost 70% of those sleeping rough, slept in the heart of the city centre.

Meanwhile, the City Council of Madrid also announced that its campaign to help the homeless during 127 cold winter days, the 'Campana contra el frio', had helped 1.635 homeless people. Of these, 35% were Spanish and 65% non-Spanish. More than 40% of those foreign born were from EU countries such as Romania and Poland. The overwhelming majority were male and aged 39.71 years old, a slight decrease in age since last year.

In Barcelona, 658 people were found to be sleeping rough. Full results will be published this summer.

► **The Netherlands: Eindhoven calls for more government funding to stem homelessness**[4/30/2008]

The city of Eindhoven in the Netherlands recently carried out a survey of homeless people which showed that the number of homeless people is on the increase: 941 people are homeless in the city, and 1.130 are at risk of homelessness. In order to stop this upward trend, the city of Eindhoven has called for an extra 4 million euro per year in government funding, to develop new and adapted social services.

National objectives to reduce homelessness by 2013 were set by the Dutch government in 2006 (see more [here](#)), such as preventing all homelessness as a result of eviction, leaving care, leaving detention centres, and providing homeless people with the means to move on from their precarious situation. The city of Eindhoven urges the government to provide local authorities with adequate funding in order to reach these objectives in the envisaged timeframe.

► **UK: Launch of New Strategy to Tackle Homelessness in Norfolk** [4/30/2008]

Ten of the largest social housing providers in Norfolk, England have joined forces as part of a new strategy to combat homelessness in the county. The alliance, chaired by Wherry Housing Association director Mark Jones, aims to facilitate exchange of resources amongst the housing providers; to prevent homelessness by helping people stay in their homes; and to ensure that housing stock is being put to the best use. It will also bring social housing providers together with local authorities to put the issue of homelessness on all levels of the political agenda.

The three year scheme which is called 'Forward Thinking' is the first project to be implemented by the Registered Social Landlords Strategic Alliance. It is also the first of its kind to operate in the UK.

Mr Jones emphasised the importance of the alliance and the project in the context of the affordable housing crisis in the UK, where in the Norfolk region alone, over 27,000 households are on the waiting list for housing.

The Scheme is supported by the Housing Corporation, Department for Communities and the Local Government.

► **Wales: £45 million funding package for Housing Association**[4/30/2008]

One of the biggest funding deals for a housing association in Wales has been struck.

Barclays Commercial Banking has backed a large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) to the Monmouthshire Housing Association. The £45m funding package will incorporate the transfer of over 3,600 properties from local authority ownership to the newly incorporated company.

The housing association, created following a ballot of local tenants, is accountable to the Welsh Assembly Government and has the capacity to raise debt funding from commercial organisations – a facility differentiating them from their council counterparts.

Says John Keegan, chief executive of Monmouthshire Housing Association “by improving the standards of housing it logically follows that standards of health and prosperity will also improve.” He adds “we have also received funding from Barclays community investment fund to create a financial education project for our tenants which supports our philosophy of addressing not only the standards of housing but also the various social issues which have an impact on our tenants.”

Announcements

► **University of Oxford Postgraduate Certificate in the Provision of Health Care to People Experiencing Homelessness**[4/30/2008]

The University of Oxford is offering a Postgraduate course in the provision of health care to people experiencing homelessness. The Programme seeks to enable students to join a supportive learning community of like-minded professionals working to provide healthcare to people experiencing homelessness; develop a knowledge and understanding of health and homelessness; work across disciplines to optimise provision of health care; acquire a foundation for the development of enhanced services for homeless people; and to contribute to improving provision of local services.

The programme is designed for students from all disciplines involved in ensuring that people experiencing homelessness have access to and receive appropriate healthcare. Applicants must either be a graduate or have successfully completed a professional training course and/or have at least five year's professional work experience in health, social care or related fields that serve people who are homeless.

For more information, please see [here](#).

Publications

► **A guide for developing social action in Europe** [4/30/2008]

UNCCAS has published a guide for developing local social action in Europe. It explains how the different European institutions operate and provides an overview of the different possibilities offered by the European Union for developing projects at local level.

There are also a number of appendices to be found in the [Europe section](#) under the European funding heading. The appendices contain direct links to the information sources mentioned in the guide, to funding programmes, and to examples of existing projects.

To download the guide, please see [here](#).

► **Considering the Implications of the enforceable right to housing**[4/30/2008]

This report provides a comprehensive review of the DALO law (the enforceable right to housing) in France. Looking at costs, constraints and challenges, the report gives a number of recommendations on how to create a more transparent social housing policy, how to deal with the rising cost of accommodation, and how to better deal with those most excluded from the housing market.

To download the report in French please see [here](#).

► **Financial Inclusion in Social Housing**[4/30/2008]

A new guide from the National Housing Federation in the UK aims to help senior housing managers to find creative new ways of helping tenants who have difficulty managing their money.

Housing associations throughout the country are exploring new approaches to financial inclusion, with many stepping beyond their landlord role to pioneer a range of services from debt advice to affordable loans and banking facilities.

The new guide provides advice to social landlords that are considering moving into financial inclusion, and is also aimed at helping providers with existing financial inclusion schemes. It was written by Community Finance Solutions at the University of Salford, with funding from the Housing Corporation and the Friends Provident Foundation.

The guide is available from the Federation's [website](#).

► **SNAP Report on Homelessness Services and Clients in England**[4/30/2008]

This report, researched and published by Resource Information Service and Homeless Link, gives an overview of homelessness services and clients in England. Information was analysed from the Homeless UK database of homelessness services and the Supporting People database of accommodation-based services. The report makes clearer the geographical location of services, facilities provided, the vast range and types of support offered to individuals, as well as prevalence of individuals with different support needs and backgrounds.

To download the report, please see [here](#).



**The FEANTSA Flash is supported by
the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).**

This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

FEANTSA is supported financially by the European Commission. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.