



José Manuel Barroso  
President of the European Commission

Monday, 2 June 2008

**Subject: FEANTSA response to the Renewed EU social agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Dear President,

FEANTSA – European federation of national organisations working with homeless people – contributed to the Social reality stocktaking in 2007, both as FEANTSA and as member of the Social Platform. FEANTSA considers the renewed European social agenda to be of utmost importance as it is very much a cross-cutting agenda affecting areas such as housing, health, education and immigration, all areas which directly concern Europe's citizens.

FEANTSA members across Europe therefore reported back extensively on the re-emergence of extreme forms of poverty like homelessness, and we are glad to see this has been taken into account in the renewed social agenda under the priority area of "Investing in active inclusion and non-discrimination" ([Commission staff working document](#)).

However, it appears from the Commission staff working document that active inclusion is to replace the poverty/social inclusion agenda which is astonishing given the current European consensus on [social priorities](#) in the social inclusion OMC (including homelessness and housing exclusion). FEANTSA calls on the European Commission to integrate these priorities more clearly in the renewed social agenda.

FEANTSA fully supports the recommendations of the Social Platform regarding the need to make use of the existing tools for the renewed social agenda, in particular the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of social inclusion and social protection through "Structuring an inclusive dialogue with social NGOs" and "Setting clear political targets" (Social Platform, April 2008). Indeed all Social Policy areas need to include clear political objectives to be met by the EU. This could include in the field of social exclusion and poverty an EU-wide commitment to end homelessness (in response to the European Parliament call in April 2008 – see below), which would enable the European Commission to monitor national progress on homelessness in the framework of holistic homelessness strategies.

As you may know, the European Parliament adopted a [Written Declaration on ending street homelessness](#) in April 2008 (with signatures from 438 Members of European Parliament) which is clearly a strong message from the only EU institution directly representing the citizens of the EU.

As a member of the Social Platform, we are ready to cooperate with you in the implementation of the renewed social agenda to ensure that it sends an empowering and positive signal to people living in Europe.

Sincerely yours,

Hannu Puttonen  
FEANTSA President

Freek Spinnewijn  
FEANTSA Director