

habitact news

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Next HABITACT steering group meeting – Save the Date

A steering group meeting will be organized on 7th November in Prague, the day before the FEANTSA annual conference on the theme of youth homelessness.

Issues on the agenda will be updates on EU developments, new funding opportunities and decisions on the 2014 HABITACT peer review.

Online policy bank review

All municipalities in the online policy bank were contacted in July/August for the biannual review. A number of entries have been updated including those for Berlin, Cascais, Esch-sur-Alzette, Helsinki, Liverpool, Lucca, Munich, Norkopping, Stockholm, Vienna. More [here](#)

HABITACT public website—soon available in Polish

The public part of the HABITACT website is available in different languages in order to facilitate communication with local stakeholders. The public part of the website provides basic information on the partners and activities of the network.

Thanks to Jo Foltman, current HABITACT coordination assistant, we will soon have the information available in Polish—watch this space!

HABITACT peer review 2014 — call for candidates

For the last 4 years, HABITACT members have taken turns to host peer reviews on their local homeless strategy (Amsterdam 2010; Gothenburg 2011; Ghent 2012; Dublin 2013).

If you are keen to host the 2014 peer review, please send an indication of interest to info@habitact.eu by 30 September 2013.

We will decide on the 2014 peer review host during our steering group meeting on 7 November in Prague.

Dublin hosts workshop for local politicians

Dublin is holding a workshop on 2 October with local councillors and a group of councillors from other European cities.

The new three year action plan to tackle homelessness in Dublin should be adopted shortly after the workshop—the idea is therefore to stimulate debate and learn from experiences from other European cities. This is an opportunity for the work of

HABITACT policy-makers to be brought to the attention of their local politicians, and involve them directly in cross-national cooperation to tackle homelessness.

HABITACT Core Partner Cities:

Amsterdam (NL), Åahus (DK), Athens (GR), Bærum (NO), Copenhagen (DK), Dublin (IE), Esch-sur-Alzette (LU), Ghent (BE), Gothenburg (SE), Madrid (ES), Odense (DK), Ostfold (NO), Sandefjord (NO), Vitoria-Gasteiz (ES)



local news

“Back to work” project helps 150 Prague’s homeless people find jobs

A two-year “Back to work” (*‘Zpět do práce’*) project was concluded in Prague last August. The aim of the project was to help homeless or otherwise vulnerable inhabitants of the Czech capital to acquire tools necessary for a successful job research. Computers with internet connection were put at the clients’ disposal and the social workers and a lawyer assisted them in their research. The project acted also as a bridge between employers and job seekers. A financial support amounting to 40% of the wages was offered to the employers willing to participate in the project. The initiative was organised by Projekt Integrate with the support of the city of Prague and the European Social Fund. The project has registered nearly 1,500 clients, of which approximately 150 have found jobs and 120 were employed for longer periods. More [here](#).

Spain, Navarra passes a law to expropriate flats and prevent evictions

A new law has been approved recently in the Navarra region, Spain, in order to prevent evictions and reinforce the social dimension of housing. The law, which follows the example of a similar decree approved in Andalusia, grants tenants the possibility to block the eviction process for 3 years during which period the family can continue to occupy their dwelling while paying a rent that is not to exceed a 25% of the family income. The law includes also the creation of an empty housing census in Navarra and empty housing tax for empty houses which are not promptly put on the rental market. It also defines the legal grounds for expropriation and entrusts the municipal inspectors with tasks of research and initiation of disciplinary proceedings. More [here](#).

International street soccer championship brings 64 international teams to Poznan, Poland

The Homeless World Cup, an international street soccer championship, took place at Lake Malta, in the Polish city of Poznan in August. 46 men’s and 14 women’s teams participated in the event. The Homeless cup saw the Brazilian team gain the men’s competition’s trophy while the Mexican team was the winner of women’s championship after the two finals had gone to penalty shoot-outs. The aim of the street soccer contest is to fight the exclusion suffered by the homeless individuals and to encourage them to seek better futures, while also drawing attention to the problem of homelessness throughout the world.

The event, backed by UEFA was organised by Homeless World Cup, a network of 70 international partner organisations, with the help of numerous volunteers and was co-financed by the municipality of Poznan. More [here](#).

DIHAL and PUCA launch the « Ville Solidaire » project in France

DIHAL (Délégation interministérielle à l’hébergement et à l’accès au logement des personnes sans abri ou mal logées) and PUCA (Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture) have recently published the results of their call for proposals on the subject of “Inclusive city: literature review and the state of the art”.

The research, which will be carried out by 3 winner organisations, is a preparatory phase of the Inclusive City (*Ville Solidaire*) programme whose goal is to find innovative answers to the challenges posed by the progressing urbanisation: growing poverty, homelessness, and social exclusion. The project aims to encourage debate, research, proposals and initiatives on social issues of the contemporary city, and to develop new theories, policies and practices of urban solidarity. It is intended to involve the state, local authorities, civil society actors, foundations, professionals and researchers. While the first stage of the project aims to review the existing literature on the subject of sustainable urban development and to assess the present social policies, the subsequent phase, to be set off by another call for proposals, will act upon these findings and put solidarity towards the most vulnerable at the heart of urban action. More [here](#).

Special UN Rapporteur visits London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast and Manchester to assess housing issues

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on housing, Raquel Rolnik, will visit the United Kingdom from 29 August to 11 September 2013. She will assess policies and programmes put in place to address issues of social housing, affordability, discrimination and other questions related to the right to adequate housing.

Ms. Rolnik who visits the country at the invitation of the Government, will visit London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast and Manchester where she will meet with government officials working on housing issues, various human rights commissions, academics and civil society. She will also have the opportunity to do site visits to hear first-hand testimonies and discuss with individuals, campaigners and local community organizations.

Ms. Rolnik is an independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country’s situation or a specific human rights theme. More [here](#).



news from europe

ESF managing authorities form learning network on active inclusion of vulnerable groups

An Active Inclusion Learning Network has been brought together by a number of ESF Managing Authorities from seven countries across Europe (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden, UK) to look at interventions that promote active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. The Network will look specifically at the needs of disaffected youth, marginalized groups (including homeless people), and workless families. The work will bring together experts and practitioners to exchange views and experiences and then to recommend effective approaches to active inclusion of these different groups.

European Journal of Homelessness – Issue 7 Volume 1 now available online!

The latest issue of the EJM focuses on Access to housing for homeless people in Europe. It includes six articles on themes including the application of Housing First in the Sweden context, accommodating homeless families in the private rental sector in Vienna, and the right to settled accommodation in Scotland. More [here](#)

Recent FEANTSA health and homelessness resources

The latest issue of the European Network of Health Workers' newsletter is now available online. It contains articles on alcohol outreach nurses in Liverpool, on the significance of social relations for the well-being of homeless people, on a pilot project which addresses alcohol use by homeless people in Brussels, and finally on the use of sports and physical activities in homeless services in the Netherlands. More [here](#)

The Homeless in Europe magazine summer issue is also out, and this time collects articles on Homelessness and Mental Health. It includes articles on Traumatic Brain Injury, the health impacts of evictions and repossessions, successful psychotherapy methods for homeless people. More [here](#).

Eight Cities for Active Inclusion host national events between June and October 2013

Cities for Active Inclusion - a partnership of nine European cities (Barcelona, Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Lille Metropole-Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm) – are hosting national events on active inclusion this Autumn, including on the following themes: poverty and disadvantage (Bologna, 17 September), the social economy (Copenhagen 27 September), the long-term unemployed (Stockholm, 1 October) and social clauses in procurement (Rotterdam, 29 October). There might be an opportunity to share best practice in relation to active inclusion of homeless people. More [here](#)

Women rough sleepers— European project Phase II

After a first phase of research on women rough sleepers (WRS), this project has been extended to further assess and give a greater voice to the specific problems and vulnerabilities suffered by women across the EU who sleep rough. Specificities include sexual exploitation/abuse, the impact of other forms of violence suffered by WRS such as rape and the impact of drugs, prostitution and mental health issues on WRS and how these factors relate to WRS experiences of violence perpetrated against them. More [here](#)

European Youth Homelessness Conference – Registrations Open

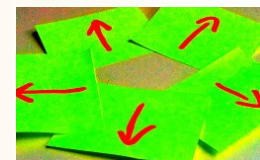
Registration is now open for [FEANTSA's annual conference](#), "Investing in young people to prevent a lost generation in Europe: key policy and practice in addressing youth homelessness", which will take place on the 8th November in Prague, Czech Republic. A HABITACT steering group meeting will be organized also in Prague on 7th November between 5 and 7pm.

European Commission call for tenders on evictions

The European Commission published a call for tenders end of July 2013 for pilot projects on "Promoting protection of the right to housing - Homelessness prevention in the context of evictions". This pilot project will focus on the protection of the right to housing as seen in a broad context, encompassing the prevention of evictions, early intervention, providing support for the rapid re-housing of those evicted and measuring the impacts of eviction, in particular on homelessness. The project will support the EU poverty reduction and active inclusion strategy through combating homelessness, reducing housing vulnerability and promoting access to quality and efficient social services as underpinned by the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Social Investment Package. More [here](#) Linked to this, please note the European Banking Authority published a [guide](#) on "Good Practices for Treatment of Borrowers in Mortgage Payment Difficulties".

Commission maps transnational city initiatives on Roma inclusion

Seven networks have been highlighted as actively cooperating to promote Roma inclusion. The European Commission has launched an [interactive map](#) which features regions and cities that have joined these initiatives. In many municipalities, the departments dealing with homelessness and Roma inclusion are separate, but these issues are clearly linked when Roma communities find themselves in ETHOS typology living situations. More [here](#)



local trends

Barcelona: the “Diagnosi 2013” report on homelessness shows data and offers solutions

The number of homeless people living rough in the city of Barcelona has grown by 47% between 2008 and 2013. 10% of the homeless population of the Catalan city is currently employed, but their wages are insufficient to pay the rent.

These numbers are contained in the recently published “Diagnosi 2013” report, developed by the Xarxa d’Atenció a Persones Sense Llar (XAPSLL), a network that brings together 31 organizations and institutions working with homeless people.

According to the report, between 2008 and 2013 the number of people who spend the night in the streets of the city has increased from 562 in 2008 to 870 people this year, while the number of homeless people who stay in facilities provided by the XAPSLL, including shelters and other municipal structures, has risen from 1,190 in 2008 to 1468 in 2013, a 23.4% increase.

The number of people whose situation can be defined by the first two categories of the [ETHOS](#) typology, (sleeping on the streets or in shelters and spending the day on the street) has gone up in the last two years, from 923 in 2011 to 1129 in 2013.

The report puts forward six proposals on preventing and tackling homelessness. These proposals include measures to prevent evictions, post-deinstitutionalisation care for people leaving prisons, hospitals or treatment centres, guarantee of quality in services, nationwide homeless strategy, housing-led approaches, and a more in-depth research on themes related to homelessness. More [here](#).

Charleroi, Belgium: significant increase in emergency accommodation requests over 12 years

In years 2008-2012, the Walloon Social Outreach Services (Relais Sociaux Wallon) in partnership with IWEPS (Institut Wallon d’Evaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique), DGO5 (Direction Générale Opérationnelle des Pouvoirs locaux, de l’Action sociale et la Santé) and the Office of the Walloon Minister of Social Action created a new tool for the establishment of a harmonized data collection system throughout the Walloon Region in relation to the themes of precariousness and social exclusion. This new system was used to compile a new statistical report, published in 2013 by the Walloon Region, on the use of the social outreach services in Charleroi, Belgium. Among other data presented, the report reveals the overall number of emergency accommodation requests met by the local homeless services over the last 12 years.

In terms of number of nights spent in emergency accommodation structures, the evolution over the last 12 years shows three distinct periods:

- 2001 to 2007: moderate and irregular increase, the maximum increase being 1,593 nights between 2004 and 2005

- 2007 to 2010: more substantial increase with a maximum increase of 5676 nights between 2009 and 2010;

- 2010 to present: the increase returns to a steady 1000 nights per year rate.

The major increase recorded during the second period between 2007 and 2010 must be understood in the light of the changes made in the service provision during this period. Faced with increasing demand, each service gradually increased the number of beds available and subsequently two public night shelters were merged thus broadening the service’s capacity significantly.

The relative stability that has occurred since then is not to be understood as a decrease in demand, as it is in fact due to lack of availability. This hypothesis is supported by the growing number of requests denied (in the last 3 years the percentage of requests denied rose from 5.4% to 17.3%). For more contact info@habitact.eu

Child homelessness surges in Northern Poland

In July the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy published a report containing the results of the national headcount of homeless people. The count took into consideration the definition of homelessness found in the Polish law on Social Assistance (which is narrower than the ETHOS typology). The methodology used for the survey was that of a point in time. The headcount was performed by street-workers and volunteers on the night between 7th and 8th of February 2013 on the people sleeping in night shelters and the rough sleepers. A questionnaire was also distributed to the people reached on this occasion.

Among other data presented in the report, a high number of children sleeping in empty or abandoned buildings and allotment shacks emerged in Kuyavian-Pomeranian Province (the number rose from 80 children in 2011 to 190 in 2013, which represents a 137% increase). A similar trend was registered in relation to women sleeping rough in the same region – in this case, an increase of 160% occurred, from 114 women sleeping rough in 2011 to 297 in 2013. The population of both women and children spending nights in homeless shelters or other emergency accommodation did not change significantly since 2011. More [here](#).