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habitact news

Review of the HABITACT website – New presentation of the network partners

Following various suggestions, we have changed the part of the HABITACT website which presents the network. Five years after its launch in 2009, the network has extended across most countries. We make a distinction between the core authorities and the wider network of contacts. We think it is important to communicate this clearly in order to show the size of the network (we are in touch with 80+ policy-makers across Europe), and have therefore changed the relevant HABITACT webpages accordingly, and integrated an interactive map of Europe to the website. See [here](#). Do send us any feedback about this at info@habitact.eu.

Reminder: HABITACT steering group meeting, 25 October 2014 in Bergamo, Italy

« Confronting homelessness in the EU: Seeking out the next generation of best practices » is the title of the next FEANTSA European policy conference take place on 24-25 October 2014 in Bergamo, Italy (see more [here](#)). This conference will organise activity hotspots on day 2, which will provide space for networks like HABITACT to meet and discuss issues of strategic interest. Hence the next HABITACT steering group meeting will take place in Bergamo, and will be open to other local authority representatives who decide to attend the FEANTSA conference. Registrations for the conference close on 10 October, but workshops and hotspots are filling up fast, so if you want to have your first choices, we recommend you register quickly. Please note that HABITACT members (up to two delegates per member) do not pay the registration fee for FEANTSA conferences. Contact: info@habitact.eu. PS Did you know that a key *Commedia dell'Arte* figure, Arlecchino, was from Bergamo?

Update of HABITACT online policy bank

The review of the policy bank is in progress. You have until 30 September to submit any updates for your local policy. The next review will take place in March 2015. You can check the entries for your local authority [here](#).

Evaluation of 2010-2014 HABITACT peer reviews

In July/August, the HABITACT coordination conducted phone interviews with the five peer review hosts (Amsterdam, Gothenburg, Ghent, Dublin and Athens) as well as with peer review guests and peer review independent experts. The information collected through the interviews will feed into reflections on the future of the peer reviews (whether to continue them in the current format or whether to adapt the peer reviews to meet new needs).

The feedback collected for the evaluation has also been used for a research paper on the impact of the peer reviews: « International learning as a driver of innovation in local-level policy-making? Achievements and challenges from peer review of local homelessness policies » which will be presented at the « Inclusive Europe » [conference](#) taking place in Berlin on 9 October. We hope this will be a good opportunity to give visibility to :

- this close cooperation between FEANTSA and HABITACT network members;
- the peer reviews as a useful tool for local policy-makers;
- the ambitions of different EU local authorities to seek innovative solutions to homelessness in their local communities.

For more information: info@habitact.eu



local news

Housing First Project launched in Barcelona

According to the latest figures from June 2014, there are 712 homeless people in Barcelona – a 13% percent decrease from last year when the same indicator of Servei d'Inserció Social (SIS) of Barcelona counted 818 people. In this context, and during the sixth year of the crisis, the Quality of Life Councillor of the City of Barcelona, Maite Fandos, launched a new initiative called the *Housing First project*, which will start in October with 60 one-bedroom flats. The vision is to provide stable homes (not temporary shelter) for homeless people living on the street, and address their support needs in their homes. Fandos pointed out that this is a pilot project inspired by the organization Pathways to Housing, which operates in the New York since 1992. The persons selected for the Housing First project must accept that 30% of their income will be used for the rent and they must accept professional home support. Fandos also noted that the new model will save money. The 1,012 places in existing temporary hostels cost between 55 and 71 euros per day, while the *Housing First* project represents an investment of 53 euros a day in the initial phase, when the user cannot contribute to the rent, and drops to 48 when the person begins to have his or her own income. Read more [here](#)

“Planet Homeless”: Research on Governance of Homelessness in Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Glasgow

Nienke Boesveldt, Amsterdam policy-maker responsible for homelessness programmes and part of the HABITACT network, is about to publish her PHD on the theme of governance of homelessness. The research looks at three cases: Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Glasgow. The policy challenges that local authorities face in dealing with this issue are complex, or according to some even “wicked”. Until recently, local authorities have had limited success in addressing homelessness, because of lack of information, fragmented services and so on. In a new attempt to face these challenges, several northern European Metropolises have published similar strategic approaches to end homelessness. This volume focuses on the impact and outcome of these new governance arrangements on the quality of service provision by studying their policy, structure and management style. By comparing and evaluating the different approaches in governance, the author shows which approach enhances homeless care most effectively and efficiently and how social results can be improved in general. In doing so this volume also provides a critical perspective on current decentralising trends. If you wish to receive a copy of the research, please contact Nienke: N.Boesveldt@amsterdam.nl

Dublin collecting information on rough sleeping in EU cities

In Dublin, a ‘Rough Sleeper Count’ is organised twice a year by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE). These counts provide a ‘point in time’ view of the number of persons sleeping rough in Dublin City. In the most recent counts, November 2013 and April 2014, 139 and 127 persons respectively were discovered rough sleeping. These figures represent the highest number of persons confirmed to be sleeping rough in Dublin, since the first Rough Sleeper Count took place in 2007. In light of these findings, the DRHE aims to identify what rough sleeping trends are occurring elsewhere across Europe. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify if persons sleeping rough are counted in towns and cities around Europe, and if so, what methodology is followed when doing this. The short questionnaire should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Please click on the following link to take the questionnaire. All survey participants will get access to the results. Deadline for taking part: 7th October 2014

New hostel for homeless people in Split

The city of Split, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Welfare in Split and the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, have provided new premises and financial resources for the opening of a new hostel for homeless people in Split. The 400 square meters hostel can host up to 40 people and is administered by the organization “Most”. The president of Most, Djordana Barbaric pointed out that the new premises are able to host twice as many people than the previous hostel thus becoming the largest hostel in southern Croatia. According to her there are around 70 homeless people in Split but the number is variable as people who leave medical or penal institutions often seek help in the hostel. Read more [here](#) and [here](#) (in Croatian)

Policies addressing family homelessness in 4 cities

Students from the “Centre d’Etudes Européennes” of Sciences Po Paris have collected some data on family homelessness in four cities: the case studies were Paris, Brussels, London and Madrid. They have published four summaries and full reports for each city:

1. Homeless families in Brussels, between emergency and structural action;
2. Homeless families in London, a policy of restriction;
3. Homeless families in Madrid: scarce public action and various informal strategies;
4. Homeless families in Paris: social hotels and financing patterns.

See all reports and more information [here](#)



news from europe

European Commission Consultation on "The Urban Dimension of EU policies – Key Features of an EU Urban Agenda"

Europe faces challenges related to the economy, the climate, the environment, and society. Most of these challenges have a strong urban dimension. More and more people argue that cities should be better involved in the design and implementation of EU policies and EU policies must be better adapted to the urban realities where they will be implemented. This [consultation](#), running from 18th July to 26th September, aims to widen the debate to all stakeholders and gather their ideas on the need for an EU urban agenda, what its objectives should be and how it could function. FEANTSA will respond to this consultation. We also invite individual HABITACT local authorities to respond to this consultation - it is an opportunity to have your say and push your local political social/housing agenda.

EU-Brazil cities cooperate on homelessness

The [report](#) (in Portuguese) "*Diálogos sobre a população em situação de rua no Brasil e na Europa: experiências do Distrito Federal, Paris e Londres*" is the outcome of action undertaken by the EU and the Government of Brazil last year including an international seminar which took place on 2-3 July 2013 in Brasilia on the issue of homelessness. The EU dimension focused specifically on two cities: Paris and London. The EU is increasingly cooperating with Latin American countries on homelessness, namely in the framework of the Eurosocial II programme. Delegates from Latin America will be present at FEANTSA's annual policy conference on homelessness in Bergamo on 24-25 October 2014.

URBACT III - EU funding programme for local authorities

The URBACT NATIONAL INFODAYS will be a unique opportunity for city stakeholders, practitioners and decision makers to get information in national languages about the results of URBACT and about the perspectives for the new programming period 2014-2020. The URBACT III framework for 2014-2020 will be presented, outlining the main objectives and actions, timeline and the 1st call for proposals, which should be launched early 2015. See location and dates for the national infodays [here](#).

EU Sixth Cohesion Forum – 8/9 September 2014 - Brussels

The European Commission hosted a 2-day event on the role of EU cohesion policy, the main investment instrument of the EU aimed at reducing economic and social disparities across European regions, boosting their competitiveness and achieving the wider Europe 2020 goals. The focus of this year's forum is promotion of "development and good governance in EU regions and cities". See full agenda [here](#) to see who from your country is speaking at this high profile event.

European week of regions and cities 6-8 October 2014

This is a big event decentralised in different parts of Brussels, with a wide variety of workshops organized across the city by different organisations (from EU institutions to local authorities) on issues of interest to regional and local authorities. It includes workshops on social innovation, community-led local development, intra-EU migrants, health inequalities and more. See programme [here](#).

European conference on Roma inclusion – 2-3 October 2014

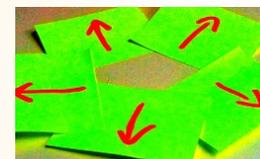
This Autumn, the European Commission, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, will organise a high-level conference in Brussels to take stock of progress and lessons learned in integrating Roma at the local level with the support of the ROMACT programme. ROMACT aims to build up the commitment of local authorities to Roma inclusion, so that local policies and public services become inclusive for all citizens, including Roma, and that - when necessary - municipalities apply for and use EU funds to implement Roma inclusion measures. ROMACT is implemented in about 40 municipalities in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Italy since 2013. The HABITACT coordination team will take part in the conference. More [here](#) about the conference.

Cities call for more power to manage migration

Mayors and representatives of cities from around the world, European institutions and international organizations have adopted a [statement](#) calling for greater decision-making power and more resources for local authorities in managing human mobility. See more [here](#).

European structural and investment funds – update

The European Commission has adopted 16 [partnership agreements](#) (PA) so far on the use of the structural funds from 2014-2020. While the full PAs are in the language of the country, they are generally accompanied by an English summary which gives an idea of the political priorities. These PAs will now be translated into regional operational programmes. Concerning the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD), national governments are now preparing their operational programmes (OPs), deciding on the key priorities for the next 5 years. See for instance more information about the French OP [here](#). Some OPs are likely to focus explicitly on supporting the fight against homelessness, including homeless EU migrants. If you would like to know more or share information about FEAD developments in your country, contact info@habitact.eu



local trends

Athens: Number of homeless substance abusers doubles

The number of substance abusers living on the streets of the capital has doubled since the beginning of the country's economic crisis, according to research by the Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA). 44.4 percent of the substance abusers interviewed by members of KETHEA's street team said they were homeless, an increase from 35.2 percent last year and 24.5 percent in 2010. The standard of living of those who do have a roof over their heads has deteriorated too, with four in 10 substance abusers telling aid workers that their homes lacked electricity and running water. Six out of 10 of those questioned said they had no means of regular income while six in 10 of the female substance abusers who were interviewed admitted to selling sexual services to finance their habit and to make ends meet. Virtually all the substance abusers questioned by KETHEA's street team said they had health problems and limited or no access to public healthcare. Four in 10 said they lacked health insurance, one in 10 claimed to be HIV positive and three in 10 suffer from hepatitis. There are fears that the proportion of substance abusers affected by these and other diseases is much higher than KETHEA's research indicated as many have not undergone medical tests recently or indeed ever. Read more [here](#).

Latest homeless figures in Rome, Italy

3276 homeless people are reported to be living in Rome, that is 0.11% of the total population of the Italian capital according to the survey made by the foundation De Benedetti between 17th and 19th of March 2014. 87% of rough sleepers (living on the streets or in makeshift shelter) and 78% of hostel users are men. However, the percentage of homeless women in Rome is higher than in other Italian cities. 57.8% of people sleeping outside hostels live on the streets, 36.3% sleep in a trailer and 5.9% in a car or van. The majority of homeless people are foreigners, who represent 58% percent of the total hostel users. On average, the first experience of homelessness happened five years before the survey, and since then 65% percent of the respondents have never returned to a real "home". The average period of homelessness for Italians is 8.2 years, and 3.9 years for immigrants. It amounts to 6 years for rough sleepers and 5 years for hostel users. A large part of the respondents (80%) slept on the streets the first time they experienced homelessness. 46% of interviewed immigrants arrived in Italy without the necessary documents and 41% are not in possession of a residence permit. Read more [here](#)

Dramatic rise of families forced out of London

The number of homeless households forced to move outside London has risen by nearly 40 per cent in one year, leaked figures have shown. The draft Inter Borough Accommodation Agreement report reveals that there were 336 placements of homeless households outside the capital in the last quarter of the 2013/14 financial year - up from 211 in the same period the previous year. This equates to a threefold increase in the number of placements outside the capital since records began in the first quarter of 2012/13, when 113 were recorded. There have been a total of 1,918 out of London placements since then. Dr Sam Royston, policy advisor at the Children's Society, said the charity was 'concerned' by councils placing vulnerable households outside their local areas. 'Families really rely on local services to provide them with the support that they need from schools to local health services, which are crucial,' said Dr Royston. 'Also there are issues around families being placed away from where their families are in some cases and also potentially where they have a reasonable prospect of finding work.' Read more [here](#).

Prague: Town halls resist the opening of new facilities for homeless people on their territory

The number of homeless and unemployed substance abusers has been increasing in Prague and approximately 16,000 substance abusers will be living in the city next year, according to the annual report on Prague's anti-drug policy. The report indicates that the health state of people addicted to substances has been worsening and that there are not enough social facilities for them in the city, as it has been repeatedly criticized by nongovernmental organizations working with these people. The Prague City Hall and the town halls of individual city districts paid over 60 million CZK for aid to substance users and for prevention campaigns. Though the town halls have to deal with more substance abusers and increasing crime, most of them do not want a facility for addiction treatment or drug prevention on their territory. The Prague City Hall asked all 57 districts of the city to recommend places suitable for a new hostel and a contact centre, but all except one rejected the possible construction of such a facility on their territory, the report states. Experts say the problem is that services for substance abusers are missing in some parts of the city. The City Hall wants to support the establishment of smaller centres by, in exchange, granting subsidies for schools and sports areas to the cooperating town halls. Read more [here](#).