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## habitact news

### HABITACT peer review 2015 – Full Discussion Paper available online!

The discussion paper for the peer review taking place on 9-10 April 2015 in Odense, Denmark is now [online](#). The discussion paper (prepared by the peer review independent expert, Dr Volker Busch-Geertsema, begins by setting the context of responses to homelessness and social exclusion at the European level. It then examines homelessness in relation to the Danish national context, before providing an overview of key elements of homelessness policy and wider urban policies to create an inclusive city with a view to characterising the Odense approach. The detailed case study of homelessness and urban policy in Odense is then compared with the wider research evidence base across other European countries in order to identify potential for transferability of elements of the Odense model to other local contexts. The discussion paper concludes by formulating key questions about the Odense approach for consideration in the peer review meeting.

The paper will serve to prepare discussions in Odense in April.

### Next HABITACT steering group

The steering group will next meet in Paris, alongside the FEANTSA policy conference taking place on 18-20 June 2015. The steering group meeting will be part of the conference “networking hotspots” taking place from 10-13h on Saturday 20 June. As usual this will be an open meeting, so that any representatives from local authorities at the conference are welcome to join us. Themes on the agenda will include: HABITACT peer reviews, an update on EU developments which have an impact on the work of local policy-makers, and a discussion on various emerging policy challenges. Register for the conference and steering group [here](#).

### Research published by HABITACT member

On the 24th of April Nienke Boesveldt, who works for the city of Amsterdam and is an active member of Habitact, will defend her PHD thesis 'Planet Homeless', on governance arrangements in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Glasgow. By comparing and evaluating the different approaches in governance, she provides deeper insight into exactly which elements of administrative and political approaches, or which governance arrangements, are most effective in this respect and how social results can be improved in general. This thesis also provides a critical perspective on current decentralising trends and contains a plea for a corporate, instrumental approach towards governance arrangements on homelessness. Boesveldt concludes that the social relief sector should function as a trampoline, not as a last resort. For more information, see [here](#)

### Next HABITACT study visit

As part of the Odense peer review, delegates will have three study visits to choose from:

Visit 1: Guided tour in a neighbourhood which is being upgraded, showing the area where the GPS tracking [experiment](#) took place. This visit will be accompanied by a city planner and NGO director managing a night hostel in the area.

Visit 2: Dialogue with a public housing company of Odense to discuss their perspective on homelessness, challenges, successes, their position on the housing market, and more.

Visit 3: Visit of a traditional temporary hostel in Odense which is testing the Housing First model, followed by a discussion on the difficulties and successes of the transition to Housing First. Workers in this hostel provide Housing First support, so are shifting gradually to providing floating support in permanent housing rather than providing support in the hostel, which is having a significant impact on their work methods.



## local news

### Paris launches a joint action plan to tackle homelessness

Coordinated by Dominique Versini, Deputy Mayor in charge of solidarity and the fight against social exclusion, the 5-month consultation enabled participants to draw up a 106-point action plan which will be rolled out between 2015 and 2020. Developed in consultation with those affected or vulnerable to social exclusion rather than simply for them, the plan is structured around five strategic pillars focused on improving conditions allowing the socially-excluded to know and exercise their rights, increasing measures to prevent individuals becoming socially excluded, intervening more effectively on the ground, enhancing long-term resettlement, and developing a partnership-governed coordination effort featuring interdisciplinary teams. The overall aim is to improve the response to social exclusion by adopting a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach rather than a compartmentalised one. More [here](#) (in French).

### Social cooperatives to support pathways out of homelessness in Kielce

The Holy Cross Regional Office in Kielce (Poland) has launched training for NGO representatives, showing the possibility of establishing social cooperatives (an entity that combines the features of a company and an NGO), to support pathways out of homelessness and from social exclusion return to the labour market. The project, which draws attention to the benefits of cooperation with local NGOs in the implementation of social activities, targets non-governmental organisations engaged in the region's hostels, night shelters and shelters for homeless people. The pilot project in the region is co-financed by the Swiss programme of cooperation with the new EU member states. More [here](#) (in Polish).

### Council saves hundreds of people from homelessness

Cheshire East Council played a key role in preventing hundreds of people being made homeless in 2014. Now, the Council's Cabinet has agreed the Homelessness Strategy for 2014-17, which looks to build on the good work the authority has done over the past three years. The new strategy focusses on five key areas: providing effective early intervention, complex needs and crisis management, support, accommodation and affordability and communication. This strategy sets out ways to further reduce the number of homeless people in the Borough such as providing a drop-in centre in the south of the Borough and improving advice and liaison for those leaving care or prison. It will also look to stop rough sleeping by building on the '[No Second Night Out](#)'

project and work with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to prepare tenants for the roll-out of Universal Credit. There are 52 actions set in the Homelessness Strategy which will be monitored every three months by the Homeless Strategy Steering Group. More [here](#).



## International news

### San Francisco: Library social worker to assist homeless people

Instead of trying to keep homeless residents from taking shelter in the public libraries, San Francisco main library, in a partnership with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, has adopted a new approach: employing a trained professional to address the needs of these visitors. In many ways, its popularity as a homeless hangout is no surprise because the library is centrally located, free and open to anyone, doesn't have security checks and has plenty of bathrooms. But the library has begun to turn the page on the problem by hiring what is believed to be the country's first full-time psychiatric social worker stationed in a public library. The social workers can help with such issues as education, emergency services (food, clothing, housing, and crisis support), employment, family matters, health improvement (including health insurance, immigration, and support groups for men, women, and teens. More [here](#).

### Sydney: Real Estate Agents Help to Reduce Homelessness

Real estate agents in the Macarthur region of Sydney, Australia, are helping to prevent tenants in crisis from becoming homeless, and in two years they have saved 57 tenancies. The initiative, named The Macarthur Real Estate Engagement Project (MREEP) is a collaboration between real estate agents, homelessness service providers and various government agencies and unemployment support in Western Sydney. It has become an operating practice because the social outcome is aligned with commercial returns. Indeed, averting tenant evictions benefits real estate agents by saving stress, time and money, as well as saving rental loss and remediation costs for their clients, the landlords. The project aims are to ensure tenants at risk of eviction are introduced to available support services to reduce new cases of homelessness; and as trust builds between real estate agents and the social sector, providing people in temporary or refuge housing situations access to rental opportunities. More [here](#).



## news from europe

### **FEAD Annual meeting with representatives of partner organisations at EU level - 9 March 2015**

Representatives of 10+ European organisations and European Commission staff met in March to discuss the implementation of the new FEAD programme (Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived). At this point in time, [all FEAD operational programmes](#) have been adopted. Some things worth highlighting:

1. About a third of the countries have highlighted homelessness or homeless people as an explicit target of their operational programme.
2. Most countries have opted for food/material assistance programmes. Four countries have opted for social inclusion programmes (The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden).
3. In the operational programmes, accompanying measures for the material/food assistance include temporary shelter and psychological support and empowerment.

### **Written question from European Parliament to European Commission on affordable housing in the EU**

A UK Member of European Parliament submitted a [question](#) in January 2015 about the European Commission's intention to review EU guidelines on state aid, which have an impact on how countries design their housing (and social housing) systems. The [answer](#) says there will be a review in 2017 and refers to EU support to integrated housing interventions under the ERDF, including measures aimed to tackle homelessness.

### **FEANTSA policy conference 2015: "Homelessness, a Local Phenomenon with a European Dimension – Key Steps to Connect Communities to Europe", Paris, 18-20 June 2015**

This year, the FEANTSA annual policy conference will bring together 300 homelessness practitioners in Paris on 18-20 June to :

1. Support policy and practice in the field of homelessness, with a focus on social service/policy innovation, helping practitioners to learn from other EU countries.
2. Link local realities to different European policy/legal frameworks, demonstrating where synergies exist already and reflect on potential synergies.
3. Provide space for the emergence of new transnational dynamics through organised networking hotspots.

See full programme and registration information [here](#).

As usual this is an open conference, and representatives from local authorities (policy designers, policy implementers, politicians) are welcome to join. Some local authorities are among the speakers, and there will be some presentations on local homeless strategies.

Questions? [info@habitact.eu](mailto:info@habitact.eu)

### **Call for Papers: European Journal of Homelessness Vol. 9, No. 2. 2015: Special Section on the Implementation of Homeless Strategies at the Local Level**

The Editorial team of the European Journal of Homelessness, as a contribution to enhancing knowledge on aspects of homelessness and housing exclusion in Europe, [seeks submissions](#), which provide case studies of the context and challenges in implementing national level homeless strategies at a city or regional level. It is envisaged that these contributions will form a special section in the European Journal of Homelessness. To be considered for inclusion in the Journal, papers must be submitted to the lead editor, Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan ([tosullvn@tcd.ie](mailto:tosullvn@tcd.ie)) before the **5<sup>th</sup> of June 2015**. Informal contact with the editor in relation to potential submissions is welcomed.

### **URBACT III call for project proposals**

From 2014 to 2020, different calls for proposals will be launched under the Urbact III programme, a programme supporting transnational exchanges between Europe's cities. This year, two calls for proposals will be issued. The first [call for proposals](#) will be for «Action Planning Networks» and will be launched very soon. According to the Urbact III programme, cities are the ultimate expression of shared space: «Open and tolerant, the optimum European city model is built on social justice and economic opportunity...The cohesive city challenge will be to secure economic growth without widening inequalities and to find new and creative ways to design and deliver publicly funded services.». This is very much in line with the approach used by cities of the HABITACT network to address homelessness.

### **A future EU urban agenda—discussions in full swing**

Following a first stakeholder consultation by the European Commission last year, the European Parliament is now also preparing an opinion report with recommendations for a future EU urban agenda. The Eurocities network have also published their [recommendations](#). They have identified five focus areas:

- Cities as drivers of quality jobs and sustainable growth;
- Inclusive, diverse and creative cities;
- Green, free-flowing and healthy cities;
- Smarter cities;
- Urban innovation and governance in cities.

These align, to a large extent, with the EU's strategic priorities and provide a strong strategic operational framework for EUROCIITIES.



# local trends

## Near zero rough sleepers in Copenhagen

In connection with the Copenhagen annual homeless count, Projekt UDEFOR and the Homeless Unit of the Municipality of Copenhagen went on the street, the night between February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, from 1 am to 5 am to count how many homeless were sleeping rough in the streets of Copenhagen on a random night. Fourteen members of staff from projekt UDEFOR and the Homeless Unit of the Municipality of Copenhagen respectively in two-man teams counted rough sleepers in seven areas of Copenhagen. They counted 40 rough sleepers in all, of whom 32 were foreigners, four in the youth category whereas three were women. City of Copenhagen's homeless chief Steen Bo Pedersen is also positive about the new counting method. The national homeless count in Denmark takes place every second year, covering most Danish cities including Copenhagen. Previously, the count has been carried out by asking staff of shelters and organisations their evaluation. This year, the ambition of the Copenhagen count was to obtain a more exact picture. More [here](#) (in Danish).

## Brussels: Homelessness and inadequate housing increases by 33% since 2010

The evening of 6 November 2014, the [Strada](#) (Support Centre to help homeless people in Brussels), in partnership with professionals of the sector, achieved a third count of homeless people, people without housing and in inadequate housing in the Brussels-Capital Region. The count, conducted by more than 160 volunteers from 23h00 to midnight, was carried out in the 19 Brussels communes as well as the airport of Zaventem. Following the [ETHOS](#) methodology for the count (using seven of the thirteen categories) a total of 2.603 people were surveyed (see diagrams below). Among the 2.603 people counted, 30% were homeless (16% in the street and 14% in reception centres and emergency shelter), 31% homeless and 37.5% living in inadequate housing (16% in squats, and 7% within « negotiated » occupations which are collective living quarters). Overall, the number of homeless people has increased by 33% between 2010 and 2014. This increase was particularly significant in

squats (+ 322%) and unregistered accommodation facilities (+ 67%) and emergency shelter (+ 30%). More [here](#) (in French).

## Rome, Milan, Naples: Appeal to the government to block increasing evictions

From the periphery to the centre, policy makers of the three most populated areas of Italy (Rome, Milan and Naples) are asking the Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to take measures to prevent evictions. "Between 30 and 50 thousand families, in Italy - highlight the municipal councillors - are at risk of eviction due to the failure on the extension of the period of expulsion. Since the crisis, five years ago, Rome has recorded over ten thousand sentences to end the lease; 4.500 in Naples and 4 thousand judgments of eviction in Milan always between 2008- 2013". The 70% of these families are eligible for income support (elderly, children, disabled) by law. More [here](#) (in Italian).

## Number of homeless people doubles in Salzburg

The number of homeless people in the city of Salzburg has increased by 200 people in the last ten years. There are 1.459 homeless people living in the city, 374 of whom are children and young people. The real figure is probably even higher since people who visited none of the 38 care facilities do not appear on the survey. Although the increase is moderate in comparison to the previous year, the longer-term trend is however dramatic. Homeless people who sleep on the street are only a small part of the homeless population. Two-thirds are men, one third women. More [here](#) (in German).

