

habitact news

HABITACT events 2011

- **The second HABITACT Peer Review** was held on 31 March-1 April in Gothenburg (Sweden). It was hosted by Gothenburg City Council, with the help of Gothenburg City Mission and FEANTSA. Delegates from eleven peer cities, NGO-representatives as well as researchers participated in the peer review.

On the first day, the hosts presented Gothenburg's housing-led homeless policy. The peer review participants also had the chance to see the Gothenburg model in practice through three study visits, each illustrating a different aspect of the approach: [Ergon](#) (job training centre run by City Mission), [Tillfället](#) and [Gula villorna](#) (housing projects run by Gothenburg City).

On the second day, independent expert Lars Benjaminsen (Danish National Centre for Social Research) presented his analysis of the Gothenburg approach, followed by a peer discussion of the model's key elements. Contact info@habitact.eu for more information.

- **The 6th European Seminar on Local Homeless Strategies** on "Governance of Homeless Service Provision at Local Level: One-Size-Fits-All or Diversity of Models across Europe" was held on 17 June in Brussels. It was hosted by the Committee of the Regions with the help of FEANTSA and HABITACT.

The opening speech was held by Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions, who highlighted the importance of social housing and individual approaches to tackle homelessness.

The plenary sessions were dedicated to one service provision model each, showing practical examples and analysing positive and negative aspects:

~ partnership-model: local authority and NGO(s) working closely together; + all stakeholders involved in planning; - risk of authorities becoming mere administrators of the problem

~ in-house model: homeless services provided by municipality alone; + local context taken into account; - risk of homeless people staying in temporary accommodation for too long

~ market-based model: based on tendering procedures; + space for innovation; - competition for financial support in times of austerity measures.

In his conclusions, FEANTSA director Freek

Spinnewijn pointed out that, although different service provision models exist and local contexts may differ, a certain degree of partnership was essential for any model to work. Download the seminar presentations [here](#).

Housing First Europe project receives funding

The application for the Housing First Europe project, submitted by the Danish National Board of Social Services (Servicestyrelsen) together with the German research institute GISS and FEANTSA in August 2011, has now been accepted for funding through the European PROGRESS programme.

A number of HABITACT cities will take part in this social experimentation project, which aims to test HF projects in five European cities and evaluate the pros and cons of the HF approach. The objective is to bring greater clarity on how the model, which was developed in the USA, could be translated into the European context.

HF is about placing homeless people directly into long-term self-contained housing. By contrast, the traditional "staircase" models, which predominate in many European countries, require homeless persons to prove they are "housing ready" before offering them stable long-term accommodation.

The 2-years HFE project will start in August 2011. It has two pillars:

1. A research and evaluation pillar: On the basis of the practical experience in the test sites, research on the effectiveness of the HF approach will be carried out.

2. A mutual learning pillar: Project participants and other stakeholders will be brought together to discuss the projects and assessment results, using the peer review methodology. The first meeting will be held in the beginning of October 2011 in Copenhagen. For more information contact info@habitact.eu.

HABITACT Partner Cities:

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

Go to the [website](#) for more info.

HABITACT News 1

Local News 2

News from Europe 4

Local Trends 5

Focus: Structural funds and homelessness 6

This e-bulletin is available online at www.habitact.eu

local news

Development of a Spanish Network of Local Homeless Service Providers

On 21 June, the 1st Technical Seminar on Social Innovation and Homelessness was held in Madrid (Spain).

At the seminar, the Spanish Secretary of Social Policy, Isabel Martínéz highlighted the importance of “sustainable and inclusive” economic growth in order to avoid social exclusion.

Moreover, the City of Madrid, the City of Valencia, the Region of Aragon and the Balearic Islands announced they would work together to tackle homelessness. In 2011/12 they plan to jointly organise four training courses and to produce e-learning material on homelessness.

Martínéz also explained that the Spanish Government was currently working on a Strategy for Developing a Network of Local Homeless Service Providers. The strategy is due to be published this summer. The aim of such a network would be to plan and evaluate homeless services by means of mutual learning in order to develop more effective strategies against homelessness. The Spanish Government also aims to strengthen cooperation between the National Institute of Statistics and local stakeholders in order to gain more clarity about the homeless situation and homeless services across Spain. Read more on the seminar [here](#) (in Spanish).

Arnhem wants to reduce rooflessness by 50% until 2014

According to Arnhem City Council (Netherlands), there are currently around 300 roofless people in the Region of Arnhem. Until now, the municipality annually invested €10 million in social care.

However, in the coming years, the social sector in Arnhem will have to face budget cuts of up to 40%. For this reason, the municipality of Arnhem developed a new social and homeless policy called: “Less care, better life.” The plan aims to make homeless services in Arnhem more cost-efficient, to reduce periods of homelessness, to help people regain independence as soon as possible and to make better use of capacities and resources. The focus of the new policy, which will be implemented from June 2011 onwards, are the following three pillars:

~ Prevention of homelessness: Improved cooperation between services to facilitate the detection of problematic cases and early intervention.

~ Individualised care: Development of individual care-plans for each homeless service user.

- Continuous care: Formerly homeless persons are being helped to sustain themselves in independent housing.

While the municipality of Arnhem is positive about the implementation of the new plan, shelter associations in the region fear it could be implemented too quickly, without giving them sufficient time to find continuous accommodation for people now sleeping in night shelters. Read more [here](#) (in Dutch).

Budapest criminalising homeless people

On 27 April 2011, Budapest City Council adopted a decree according to which sleeping in public space is considered an offence. Now rough-sleepers might be sanctioned to pay fines of up to 50 000 forint (= €200). In addition to that, homeless people can also be fined for searching for food in public garbage bins. Since homeless people do not have the means to pay such fines, they are likely to be harassed or put into detention by the police.

Activists and NGOs in Budapest express concern regarding the situation. On 27 April a protest against the decree was staged by a group of civil activists (calling themselves “The City Belongs To Everybody”), some of which homeless themselves. The protesters entered the council room holding up signs reading “Not a crime to be poor” or “Housing not prisons”. Budapest police stopped the demonstration. In addition to that, Budapest City Council has recently annulled all contracts with local NGOs providing services for homeless people and significantly decreased the financial support for homeless services.

Also, on 23 June the Hungarian Parliament debated a proposal to amend the law on criminal offenses. The proposal is that people “found guilty of rough sleeping” within six months of first receiving a fine for this “offence” should pay a fine of €600, or be imprisoned if they are unable to pay it. FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with Homeless People, issued two press releases condemning the criminalisation of homelessness in Budapest. The Budapest decree is breaching constitutional principles in Hungary as well as International Human Rights Law. FEANTSA also expresses concern about similar developments in other European cities (e. g. in [Madrid](#)) and calls on the EU institutions to react on this matter. Click [here](#) to download the press releases.

Paris: Manifesto for housing the homeless

On 23 June, several elected politicians from Paris Region, including Paris-mayor Bertrand Delanoë, have presented a manifesto calling on the French Government to change its housing and homeless policy.

In this manifesto, backed-up by organisations Terre d’Asile, the Abbé Pierre Foundation and Médecins du Monde, the politicians criticise the Government’s housing and homeless policy. According to the critics, the French Government has ordered to shut down thousands of shelter places in the capital region – although the crisis has exacerbated poverty and led to the eviction of many families. The manifesto states that there is currently a lack of 13 000 emergency places and that the French Government, instead of supporting the creation of new places, has ordered the managers of organisations 115 and Samusocial to close 5000 night places.

Furthermore, the signatories of the manifesto call on the French State to support a “more balanced territorial spread” of shelters and social housing.

The French Secretary of State for Housing, Benoist Apparu, reacted to the manifesto, saying the number of shelter places in Paris Region had never before been as high as it is now. According to Apparu, there currently are 43 000 places, which would equal 65% more than in 2006. Apparu also underlined that increasing shelter places was no sustainable solution to the homeless problem. He said that homelessness should be prevented and access to housing should be made easier. Apparu underlined that cooperation of all local stakeholders was necessary in order to tackle homelessness.

A first step towards more cooperation was taken on 30 June, when the minister received the signatories of the manifesto for an initial discussion on the subject matter. Read more [here](#) (in French).

Contribution by BAG-W on emergency accommodation in German municipalities

In e-bulletin issue 6, HABITACT published an article on a directive adopted by the municipality of Mönchweiler in Germany. According to this directive homeless people have to pay a user-fee ranging from €2.60 to €4 per square metre and month, since placing homeless people into emergency housing is quite a difficult process in Germany (see e-bulletin issue 6).

Thomas Specht, director of BAG-W, the German National Federation for the Homeless, and Administrative Council-member of FEANTSA, in order to explain the situation in Germany to reader's in other countries, was so kind as to contribute an article on the right to emergency accommodation in German municipalities to this issue of the e-bulletin.

The situation in Germany is as follows: According to German “law of public order” each municipality has to offer emergency accommodation to every homeless person on its territory, regardless of the reason for homelessness. For this emergency accommodation, the municipality can only ask the user to pay fees, if the municipal council has decided so in a directive. The fee's only purpose is covering the actual cost the municipality pays for the accommodation, but no more than that. Only then is the homeless person obliged to pay the user-fee, if he/she is not covered by minimum subsistence laws.

Even if a municipality cannot offer emergency accommodation and the homeless person is placed into social housing or a hostel. In either case, if a homeless person cannot pay the user fee, the municipality still has to provide the person with accommodation and additional help.

The position of the German BAG-W on emergency accommodation is laid down in its Housing Policy Programme. First and foremost, BAG-W underlines that evictions should be prevented and if this can not be done each homeless person has to be offered suitable accommodation. Click [here](#) to download BAG-W's Housing Policy Programme (see chapter 7).

Shortlist for Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards announced

In June 2011, London Councils announced the short listed projects for the Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards. The competition is open to all London-based homeless projects, whether run by city councils, by registered social landlords or by non-profit organisations.

The short listed candidates, between whom a total of £50 000 will be divided this year, are:

~ Broadway, The Old Theatre Hostel: A hostel with twelve studio flats for long-term homeless people. Residents are allowed to negotiate their own house rules with the staff – this way they feel empowered.

~ City of London, The Personalised Budgets Project: This project focuses on providing personalised budgets and care-plans to the most entrenched rough sleepers, in order to help them move on to accommodation.

~ SHP, Camden Aftercare & Social Inclusion Services: The project works with people living in supported housing who have substance abuse problems. The aim is to provide these people with training and employment. Some courses are developed by the clients themselves.

~ St. Mungo's and the City of London, The Lodge: A 3*-hotel-style accommodation for rough sleepers, which has been developed as a response to service users who found traditional hostels too intrusive and overwhelming.

~ St. Mungo's, Employment Team Business Hub: This project provides support to homeless people wishing to set up microbusinesses, that can be run with modest capital and skills.

~ Westminster City Council, Literacy Strategy for rough sleeping services: The project teaches homeless people with poor reading skills, an estimated 40% of hostel residents, how to read. Literacy skills are crucial to break the cycle of homelessness.

Read more about the awards [here](#).

Graz and Steiermark: Begging forbidden

On 2 May 2011 a new anti-begging law entered into force in the city of Graz and the region of Steiermark (Austria). While so far only aggressive begging and child-begging had been banned, now begging is completely forbidden. Even helping beggars is illegal according to this new law.

The law affects about 100 Roma, who have been living in Graz already for a longer time. According to local NGOs, they have never harassed anyone and are only begging out of necessity. Amongst the local population, solidarity with the Roma is widespread.

Even now that the law has entered into force, Austrian lawyers Christian Brünner and Wolfgang Benedek are planning to fight against it. In their opinion, the law neglects basic human rights. Those cannot just be altered, unless they endanger public security. Moreover, many demonstrations have been organised in Graz.

Read more [here](#) (in German).

news from europe

Homeless in Europe magazine out now

The spring 2011 edition of FEANTSA's Homeless in Europe magazine on "Homeless Health, Health and Homelessness: Overcoming the Complexities" is now available.

Research has shown that the relationship between health and homelessness is somewhat reciprocal – homeless people often are more affected by health problems than the average population. This complex issue is addressed by the new HiE magazine.

One of the articles, by Joan Uribe Vilarrodona, presents the homeless health services in the City of Barcelona (Spain). It contains ideas on how local health services for homeless people could be made more efficient. You can download the magazine [here](#) or order written copies by contacting [Suzannah Young](#).

The concept of social innovation

Being faced with many challenges – the ageing society, social housing, the integration of marginalised groups and promoting employability, the fight against poverty – the European Union has developed the ambitious EU2020 strategy, the aim of which is smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for Europe within the next decade. In order to reach this goal and to cross-fertilise the two main flagship initiatives of the EU2020 (the European Platform against Poverty and the creation of an information union), new products, services, structures and approaches are needed. Products, services, structures and approaches that meet arising social needs and create new social interaction – namely *social innovation*. The concept of social innovation is trying to find new ways to solve previously unresolved social problems. Since it is important that this move towards innovation is backed up by sufficient testing of the new ideas, the concept is closely linked with the term *social experimentation* (= evidence-based policy development).

Currently, social innovation is high on the EU agenda. The EU and its institutions are currently engaging more and more in dialogue with national, regional and local authorities, since these are the frontrunners of social innovation and implementing policy.

On 10 May 2011, the Forum on Social Innovation "European vision, local action" was held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. After the introductory panel discussion on the delivery of quality services in times of austerity, many examples for social innovation were presented during workshop sessions and at a side-exhibition (e. g. Hope in Stations, an integration project of social services for homeless persons carried out at European train stations).

For more information on the Social Innovation Forum, click [here](#).

EC calls on Member States to develop National Strategies for Roma Integration

About 10-12 million Roma people are living in Europe. In many countries, regions and cities Roma people are being socially excluded and discriminated against (see local news article on Graz), while governments lose out on increased revenue and productivity because potential talent could go wasted. It is crucial to address this issue and to develop effective actions against the exclusion of Roma people. Therefore, the European Commission urges Member States to set National Strategies for Roma Integration until the end of 2011.

On 5 April 2011 the European Commission published a press release on its recently launched European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. This EU Framework aims to support the development of national (and also regional and local) Roma integration policies.

The Framework focuses on four pillars: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.

The press release highlights the importance of closing the gap in access to housing and public utilities such as water and electricity.

In their strategies, Member States should specify how they will contribute to the achievement of these goals, which are important to help Member States reach the EU2020 poverty reduction target.

Read the press release [here](#).

Save the date – European Conference on Quality in Social Services

On 21 October 2011, FEANTSA, together with Caritas Accueil et Solidarité, the Confédération Caritas Luxembourg and the University of Luxembourg, will host the first European Conference on Quality in Homeless Services – the FEANTSA Annual Theme 2011. In this context, FEANTSA's national members have been taking stock of quality provisions in homeless services, aiming to identify existing frameworks as well as their evaluation by the service providers. The findings will be gathered in a European Report on Quality in social services from the perspective of services working with homeless people first presented at the Conference on the 21st October and published in November 2011.

The conference, which comprises ten interactive workshops on various issues related to quality in homeless services, aims at providing participants with space for mutual learning and exploring the potential for developing a European Quality System for Homeless Services.

The one-day-event will take place in Luxembourg City. For more information click [here](#) or contact [Karolina Krzystek](#).

Case study on comparability of homeless data

In Spring 2011, the Data Collection Working Group of FEANTSA published a “Case study on the comparability of homelessness data collection across the EU”. The study is supposed to feed into EU debates on homelessness measurement.

For the case study, the homeless definitions and data collection methods in six European cities (Budapest, Dublin, Marseille, Oslo, Ostrava and The Hague) were compared using the core standard variables recommended by the MPHASIS project (age, sex, nationality, household structure, previous accommodation, duration of homelessness) as starting point.

However, the study does not give or compare homeless numbers. The main finding of the study is that homeless data is hard to compare, due to the variety of different definitions and data collection methods used.

Therefore, in the end of the study the working group proposes a roadmap, which could facilitate the development of a Europe-wide monitoring system on homelessness to meet the data needs of the EU’s Europe2020 strategy: e. g. setting up of a European steering group on homelessness; issuing of recommendations on data collection to EU Member States; using the results of the 2011 population and housing census to draw lessons for the development of a permanent EU statistical survey on homelessness etc. Download the study [here](#).

Conference on Combating Youth Homelessness

In May 2008 the Dutch Centre for Social Development MOVISIE, together with the London Metropolitan University, the Portuguese Centre of Social Studies and Research and the Charles University Prague, set up a project called “Combating social exclusion among young homeless populations – CSEYHP”.

The project, which involved the practical participation of young people, aimed to compare homeless paths among local white, local ethnic group and migrant youth in order to identify the needs of young homeless people.

On 28 April 2011, the main findings of the CSEYHP project were presented at the final conference in Brussels.

In various workshops seminar participants, amongst whom many policy-makers and policy-implementers, exchanged on life trajectories of young homeless people, early intervention models as well as education and employment needs of homeless youth.

Read more [here](#).

local trends

Bologna: Change in homeless people’s profiles

According to a report recently published by Piazza Grande, a Bologna-based homeless association, homelessness in Bologna is increasing. Between February 2010 and January 2011, the organisation has helped around 500 homeless people. However, the organisation estimates that the number of invisible homeless people is just as high. This would mean a total of 1000 homeless people in Bologna.

Piazza Grande says that, in recent years, the profiles of homeless people have been changing: While 173 of the homeless people have mental health or substance-abuse problems, 120 have no problem like this – they simply are poor and cannot afford housing.

The majority of homeless people in Bologna are male adults (85%): 32% are between 45 and 64 years old, 27% are between 25 and 34 years old and 7% are around 18 years old.

73% of the homeless people in Bologna are foreign, but most of them have a regular residence permit. Since the recent revolts in North Africa also the number of foreign homeless people has increased and homeless people are getting younger.

Piazza Grande urges the municipality to open a new night shelter and to facilitate access to public showers and baths. Read more [here](#) (in Italian).

Early investments can help prevent youth homelessness

On 25 March, British youth homelessness charity Depaul UK published a report on the prevention of youth homelessness called “Can We Afford Not To?”.

The report found that, on average, £9000 could be saved for every young person prevented from becoming homeless, even though the cost could vary from municipality to municipality.

An example referred to in the report is the municipality of Oldham. In 2009, it saved more than £1.2m by preventing youth homelessness through family mediation.

Moreover, the research carried out by Depaul UK found that prevention schemes such as family mediation could improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of a young person and prevent family breakdown.

According to Depaul UK, the research shows that, even in times of financial crisis and funding cuts, spending a small amount of money in time was important in order to make long-term savings.

The NGO urges British municipalities to invest into the prevention of youth homelessness, highlighting that the rates of youth homelessness will be going to rise in future, if key services were not funded. Read more [here](#).

Cost-effectiveness analysis of homeless service provision

The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport carried out a cost-effectiveness analysis of municipal homeless service provision. The analysis is called *Kosten en baten van Maatschappelijke opvang*. It compares cost-effectiveness of homelessness prevention, emergency and temporary services and services for people in long-term accommodation. Important results include:

- ~ Prevention of homelessness is cheaper and more effective than homeless service provision, since effective prevention means that less money is needed for running shelters.
- ~ Service provision in homeless shelters is cheaper than service provision for rough sleepers. There are less security-related problems and medical costs (e. g. ambulance rides) are lower.
- ~ In order for homeless service provision to be really effective, it is important that all service levels work together in a coordinated way.

You can download the analysis [here](#) (in Dutch).

Brussels: Increasing number of homeless women

According to a report on the 2010-2011 winter emergency plan, last winter, Samusocial Brussels helped more homeless women than usual. The winter emergency plan ended on 1 April 2011 and Samusocial had to put 400 people back in the streets.

From 24 November 2010 to 31 March 2011, Samusocial helped 61 593 homeless people. Interestingly, this last winter, there were more single women than usual amongst Samusocial’s clients.

According to Pascale Peraïta, project leader of the winter emergency plan, Samusocial helped about 70 women a day. This means that since 2010, when Samusocial helped 40 homeless women a day, the number has almost doubled. In 1999 Samusocial only had about two female clients a day.

Most homeless women in Brussels are single over 40 years of age, and many of them have psychological problems. As a result, most women have lost all their social ties.

According to Samusocial Brussels, it is crucial to develop better prevention methods and to build a special centre for homeless women, since many homeless women are reluctant to sleeping in mixed shelters. Read more [here](#) (in Dutch).

Study on homelessness in Zaragoza

In May 2011, Julián Martínez of the Spanish Red Cross and sociologist Pedro Cabrera presented a study on homelessness in Zaragoza (Spain). The study is based on the results of a homeless count carried out in the night of 23 November 2010 by 276 volunteers. The study was carried out, because in 2009, the local Red Cross realised that, in order to effectively tackle rough-sleeping, they needed to know more about the living conditions of rough-sleepers.

According to the study there are 158 homeless people in Zaragoza region. On average, these were about 42 years old. 55% were homeless as a result of unemployment, 19.6% due to financial problems and 17.9% as the result of a break-up. The majority of the homeless people in Zaragoza (89%) are men. The majority of the rough sleepers is foreign, whereas the majority of people sleeping in shelters were Spanish.

According to the author of the study, immigrants often are more vulnerable to the crisis and thus exposed to a greater risk of becoming homeless, since they often lack family support and have no access to unemployment benefits.

Pedro Cabrera highlighted that on the one hand the economic crisis lead to an explosion of homeless numbers, but that on the other hand the profile of service users, their needs and existing deficiencies of homeless services have become clearer. Read more [here](#) (in Spanish).

Homeless People in Zaragoza Region 2010	
total:	158
~ male	141
~ female	8
~ sex unkown	9
~ Spanish	57
~ foreign	101
~ aged 27-35	50
~ aged 45-53	46

focus: structural funds

European Structural Funds as a tool to address homelessness

The European Structural Funds are – alongside the Cohesion Fund – one of the EU’s financial tools to for implementing the cohesion policy, the regional policy of the European Union. EU cohesion policy and thus the Structural Funds aim to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions. All European regions are eligible for funding under the Structural Funds. There are two European Structural Funds: The European Social Funds (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The ESF is an important tool for achieving the goals of the EU2020 strategy, especially the poverty reduction target. The priority for the programming period 2007-2013 is employment, but 12-13% of the funds (€10 billion/year, which equals 10% of the EU budget) are explicitly dedicated to social inclusion. This means that homeless people are one of the target groups of ESF, either in the context of employment projects for marginalised groups or in the context of social inclusion projects. >> For more detail, click [here](#).

The ERDF focuses on infrastructures (e. g. research, telecommunications, transports). However, in 2010 ERDF regulations have been modified, allowing to use ERDF-money for housing

interventions for marginalised groups (e. g. refurbishment of old buildings, construction of social housing). >> More [here](#).

For this e-bulletin, we have chosen a focus on European Structural Funds and homelessness. In the following paragraphs, we will present local examples of ESF-/ERDF-funded projects, to highlight the importance of structural funds for homeless projects. We hope that the examples below can serve as a source of inspiration to local stakeholders planning to apply for ESF-/ERDF-funding in the future.

ESF-projects

~ **Crossroads-Project:** In November 2010 the City of Stockholm launched *The Crossroads-Project (Project EU Citizen)* in cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Agency and various NGOs (Stockholm City Mission, Red Cross etc.). The ESF-funded project aims to fight the social and economic exclusion of homeless EU-migrants. On 1 March 2011 the project opened an Advice and Support Centre that provides the target group with support for basic needs (showers, laundry etc.), integration courses (Swedish language and society) or help for the return of individuals to their country of origin. >> More [here](#) (in Swedish).

~ **Home and Away-Project:** In March 2009 the United Nations Development Programme, together with Vilnius City Shelter and Caritas Vilnius, launched the 2-years *Home and Away-Project*. It aimed to promote homeless people's integration into the labour market by developing an individualised assistance model based on best practices from across the EU. As part of the project, an interactive training programme for social workers was designed. >> Read more [here](#).

~ **Polish project:** From September 2009 until March 2011 the Lublin College of Enterprise and Administration carried out a research project on "Social and Institutional Aspects in Lublin Province". The project was funded by the European Social Fund under the social integration priority. Amongst other things, it aimed to identify the extent of homelessness in Lubelskie, to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of homeless people, and to diagnose the needs of the local homeless population as well as the services offered to them. >> Read more [here](#) (in Polish).

ERDF-projects

~ **French directive on housing for marginalised groups:** In May 2011 the French Government has published a directive in order to inform stakeholders about the new ERDF-regulation on housing for marginalised groups (see introduction). Thus, the French Government is the first one to translate the new regulation into a national context, facilitating its practical implementation. Mobilised funds could be allocated to the refurbishment of existing housing, as well as to the construction of new housing. Even though, there have been no project applications so far, many French local authorities are currently setting up housing-led

projects and inquiring about this opportunity. >> Read more about the directive [here](#) (in French).

~ **URBACT and SUITE:** URBACT can best be described as an ERDF sub-programme. Its focus lies on European exchange and mutual learning. URBACT aims to promote sustainable urban development. URBACT projects enable cities to set up common projects and develop solutions to major urban challenges through exchange of good practices. Europe-wide more than 300 cities in 29 countries are involved in URBACT-projects. The Social and Urban Inclusion Through Housing (SUITE) Project was financed under URBACT. Led by Santiago de Compostela City Council, the network of nine cities worked on issues related to sustainable and affordable housing as well as social cohesion. Each city developed its own action plan focused on social mix and sustainable housing. The project was concluded in 2011. >> Read more [here](#).

~ **Interreg IV and HOME04:** Like URBACT, Interreg IV is an initiative financed under ERDF. Its aim is strengthening economic and social cohesion across the European Union through cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. The final beneficiaries of Interreg IV funds are usually public authorities or non-for-profit organisations. Interreg IV finances many different mini-programmes, for example PEOPLE, which is led by Andalusia Region. Seven European regions (e. g. South East England and Venezia Region) were involved in this programme which aimed to promote well-being and cohesion in the context of demographical and societal changes. Under PEOPLE many different sub-projects were carried out, such as HOME04. Four European cities (Granada, Sevilla, Venice and Stockholm) were involved in this project which aimed to improve assistance to homeless people through the use of ICT tools. >> Click [here](#) to take a look at the HOME04 website.

The examples in this focus illustrate how important structural funds are for homeless projects. Currently, at EU level, the future of the structural funds and the new funding period 2014-2020 are discussed. Issues addressed include how to create more synergies between Cohesion Policy and the EU2020 goals and how the funds could be targeted more effectively towards innovative homeless projects.

On 28 June, the Committee of the Regions, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and FEANTSA hosted an event on "Social Innovation to tackle homelessness: Re-enforcing the role of the European Structural Funds". The event brought together key actors including civil servants responsible for homelessness in the different Member States as well as managing authorities of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) to consider how structural funds can be used to support the fight against homelessness. >> The seminar presentations will shortly be online [here](#).



For any reactions/comments/contributions to the e-bulletin, please contact us at info@habitact.eu