Homelessness in Europe
contribution of FEANTSA

Jornadas internacionales de personas sin hogar
Madrid 26-27 October 2006

Homelessness in Europe
contribution of FEANTSA
1. What is FEANTSA?
2. What is homelessness?
3. What is the European political context?
4. What are the European trends?
1. FEANTSA

- **Structure**
  - Only European NGO
  - Membership
    - Nature of members
    - Representativeness
    - Spain
  - Decision-making structure
  - Funding
    - Commission ~ members
    - Annual work programmes
  - Office
FEANTSA

- **Activities**
  - Transnational exchanges
    - Annual theme – employment
    - Conferences
    - Expert groups
    - ...
  - Policy influencing
    - EU / Transnational
    - Country level
  - Research
    - Research observatory
    - Research output
      - Themed
      - Statistics
  - Communication
    - [www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)
Main outcome
- Understanding of homelessness
  - Definition of homelessness
  - NGO & policy makers
- Political commitment
  - Homelessness recognised as an important issue
    - NAPs process
- Policy development
  - Ex
    - France: right to housing
    - Denmark: *freak houses*
    - UK: rough sleepers strategy
    - Ireland: ending homelessness
    - NGOs
    - ...
2. Homelessness

- **Nature of homelessness**
  - Dynamic – Process
  - Pathways

- **Dimensions of homelessness**
  - Physical
  - Legal
  - Social

- **Definition – ETHOS**
  - Roofless
  - Houseless
  - Insecure housing
  - Inadequate housing

- **Importance of definition**
  - Data collection
  - Policy making / monitoring
  - Impact
    - Ex. Lux, Romania, Czech Rep, Sweden, …
3. EU context

- **Legislative work**
  - Who is involved?
    - Brussels-based
      - Coreper
      - Commission

- **OMC – open method of cooperation**
  - Who is involved?
    - Country-based
      - Importance of local authorities
    - Social affairs
      - Homelessness?!

- **Funding**
  - Who is involved
    - Country-based
EU context - Legislation

- **EU State aid & competition rules**
  - Recent COM decision on social housing
    - *eg. Netherlands*
  - Services of General Interest
- **Free movement of persons**
  - Regulation
    - Equal rights in social protection
  - Homelessness amongst EU-8 in UK & Ireland
  - Allocation of social housing in Belgium
- **Immigration**
  - Reception condition for asylum seekers
EU context - Legislation

- Environmental legislation
  - Energy efficiency – dwellings
    - Energy labelling
    - Cost of social housing
    - Relevance for EU-8!

- Anti-discrimination legislation
  - Race, gender
  - Other – Roma directive?!

- Working hours directive
  - Night work
EU context - Legislation

- **Standardisation**
  - Designing out crime

- **Free/open market**
  - Services directive
  - Public procurement
    - Obligation (public bodies)
    - Focus on price rather than quality?!

- **VAT**
  - Social housing
  - Pressure on state budgets

- **Etc...**
EU context - Legislation

**Conclusion**

- **Impact**
  - EU impact often negative
  - EU impact often controversial

- **Role of FEANTSA**
  - Information!!
  - Coordinate lobbying
EU context - OMC

- What?
  - Soft policy making
  - In areas where no competence to legislate
  - Objective: policy development through transnational comparison (economy) and/or mutual learning
  - Instruments
    - NAPs
    - Indicators
    - Learning budgets
    - Peer reviews
  - Important
    - Role of Commission as leader
    - Commitment/interest of MS
  - Risk
    - Vague
    - Administrative exercise
EU context - OMC

- **Broad Economic Policy Guidelines**
  - Importance: Political > Learning
  - Example: Address rigidities in rental housing market
    - Spain – deregularise rental market!
    - Labour mobility
    - Prices?!

- **EU employment strategy**
  - Importance: Learning ~ Political
  - Example: Inclusive labour markets
    - Political guidelines
    - NAPs
    - MLP - Transnational exchange

- **EU health strategy**
  - Importance: Learning > Political
  - Examples: Strategies on drugs, alcohol, TB, mental health, etc.
    - Transnational exchange
    - Political guidelines???
      - Alcohol

- **Etc....**
  - EU equal opportunities
  - Sustainable development
EU context - Social inclusion OMC

- **Up till 2005**
  - Nice objectives
    - Access to housing & prevention of homelessness
  - Progress
    - Political – NAPs: priority setting
      - Homelessness is issue in a few countries (2000)
      - Homelessness is issue in all countries (2005)
    - Importance of enlargement
  - Mutual learning
    - CAP (FEANTSA)
    - Peer review

- **Since 2005**
  - Objectives
    - No mention of homelessness
  - Progress
    - Towards implementation
      - EPSCO Council 2005: Treatment of homelessness must be priority
      - NAPs: presence of homelessness & first commitments
    - Mutual learning
      - Progress (FEANTSA & European Forum to Combat Homelessness)
EU context - OMC

**Conclusion**

- **Impact**
  - Political impact varied and usually quite weak
  - Mutual learning (OMC) can work
    - Targeted
    - Issues were learning potential is high
    - Stakeholders

- **Risk for social inclusion OMC**

  - **Role of the EC**
    - Cooperation with external actors
      - Lack of expertise
      - Lack of strategic understanding
EU context - Funding

- **Structural Funds 2007-2013**
  - ERDF
    - Housing for EU-10
    - Upgrading public spaces
      - Homelessness?
  - ESF
    - Inclusive employment

- **EIB**
  - Loans
    - Social housing
    - Urban regeneration
Wider European context

- **Council of Europe**
  - Political > Learning
    - Social cohesion
    - Housing exclusion
    - Human rights

- **UNECE**
  - Political > learning
    - Habitat Agenda
    - Human settlements committee
      - Social housing
      - Land planning
      - Data collection

- **UN – Habitat**
  - Learning > political
  - Secure tenancy & sustainable urban development campaigns

- **OECD**
  - Political > Learning
  - Housing in context of economic performance
    - Spain – rental market
Wider European context - Human rights

- Council of Europe
  - ECHR
    - Right to housing becomes justiciable
    - Case law
      - right to life
      - right to private life
      - Protection against inhuman and degrading treatment
      - ...
  - Revised Social Charter
    - Art 31
    - Political pressure
      - Conviction of Slovenia / France
      - Spain
  - Conclusion
    - Impact underestimated
EU context - Conclusion

- Involvement at European level can be very useful
- How (from national/local perspective)?
  - Access and analyse information (1)
  - Access information, develop positions, and lobby national and EU policy makers (2)
4. Trends in homelessness

Profile

- Women
- Age
  - Young & Old
- Single parents
- Immigrants
  - Asylum seekers & undocumented migrants
  - Internal EU migration?!
Trends in homelessness

**Causes**

- **Structural > personal / institutional**
  - Housing affordability
    - Big urban areas (London, Paris, Madrid, …)
  - Unemployment / precarious employment
    - Homeless workers
  - *Modernising* social protection systems
    - Ex. Harz IV reforms in Germany
  - Retrenchment of the State

- **Personal**
  - Relationship breakdown
  - Addiction
  - Domestic violence

- **Institutional**
  - Release / closure
  - No adapted services
Trends in homelessness

Numbers
- Lack of systematic data collection
  - Exc. UK, Ireland, Finland, Norway...
- Total numbers: 3.000.000 ???
- Increase > decrease
- Problematic
  - Inadequate housing
    - Eastern Europe
  - Insecure housing
    - Eviction
  - Houseless
    - Bottleneck
- Progress
  - Rough sleeping in some countries
  - Systematic decrease
    - Finland
Trends in homelessness

- **Policies**
  - FEANTSA’s 10 dimensions of effective policies
    - Evidence-based
    - Comprehensive
    - Multi-dimensional
    - Rights-based
    - Participatory
    - Statutory
    - Sustainable
    - Pragmatic
    - Needs-based
    - Bottom-up
  - **What countries perform well**
    - No country fully integrated all dimensions
    - Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands ...
      - Why?
        - Size of the country
        - Size of the problem of homelessness
    - **Interesting example: Scotland**
      - Justiciable right to housing for all in 2012
Thank you for listening

Questions?