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# Investing in young people to prevent a lost generation in Europe: key policy and practice in addressing youth homelessness

European Conference  
Prague  
8 November 2013

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## CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

### Conference Objectives

This European Conference on youth homelessness in the European Union aims at looking into the pathways in and out of youth homelessness and at discussing policies and practices from across the European Union. The Conference will gather a broad range of relevant stakeholders involved in the support of young homeless people.

This event is organised by FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People, with the support of local partners – S.A.D. (Association of shelters and other organizations working with homeless people in Czech Republic), Naděje, Armáda spásy (Salvation Army) and Elim. Youth homelessness is FEANTSA's Annual Theme in 2013. A thematic paper on youth homelessness in the European Union will be produced and its results will be presented during the conference.

### Context Background

Youth homelessness is complex, and if not properly addressed, it can lead to prolonged periods of homelessness. The factors which increase the risk of young people becoming homeless are numerous and related to different issues: difficult family relationships; relationship breakdown with parents or step-parents; parents being unable to cope because of mental health or addiction problems; domestic violence; an unstable housing history; disengagement with school or poor career prospects and family poverty. Moreover risks of exclusion are multiplied during youth: the transition from financial dependency to autonomous working life is very complex.

It is widely acknowledged that young people are amongst the hardest hit by the economic crisis. A significant amount of EU countries are experiencing increases in youth homelessness. The situation is alarming as there is a high risk that young people will face long term unemployment or inactivity, impacting negatively upon their whole career and livelihood perspectives.

With such a difficult situation, we can say that combating youth homelessness has never been as relevant as now. However young people are remarkably resilient and they work hard to pull themselves out of negative situations. In the current period of high youth unemployment and long-lasting crisis, we need to make sure that homeless young people are given all the support they need in order to give them a fair chance of escaping homelessness for good.

This Conference will address all these issues and many more during two plenary sessions with experts and with young people who have experience of homelessness as well as ten interactive workshops organised thematically around the most relevant issues relating to youth and homelessness.

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## PROGRAMME

Conference Venue: Top Hotel, Prague

Blažimská 1781/4, 149 00 Prague 4 – Chodov

Conference languages: English, French and Czech

Conference Chair: Rina BEERS, FEANTSA President

8:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rina Beers, FEANTSA President</li> <li>Welcoming speech from Jiří Růžička, S.A.D. (CZ)</li> </ul>
9:15-9:30	Opening Speech
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative of CZ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</li> </ul>
9:30 – 10:45	PLENARY SESSION – Introduction: understanding youth homelessness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gwendolyn Orchard, FEANTSA (EU): <i>Commonalities and differences in youth homelessness in Europe</i></li> <li>Stephen Gaetz, York University, Toronto (Canada): <i>Combating youth homelessness in Canada: what lessons for Europe</i></li> <li>Deborah Quilgars, European Observatory on Homelessness and Centre for Housing Policy at University of York (EU): <i>A research perspective on causes and triggers of youth homelessness: what lessons for policy makers</i></li> </ul>
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 12:15	PLENARY SESSION – Explaining recent trends in youth homelessness: some countries perspectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lars Benjaminsen, Danish Centre for Social Research (DK): <i>Increasing youth homelessness in strong welfare regimes explained: the case of Denmark</i></li> <li>Dimitra Soulele, ARSIS (GR): <i>Massive increases in youth homelessness as a result of the economic crisis: the case of Greece</i></li> <li>Ilija Hradecky, Nadeje (CZ): <i>Emergence of youth homelessness as a result of ineffective discharge from institutional child care in Eastern and Central Europe: the case of Czech Republic</i></li> <li>Robert Aldridge, Homeless Action Scotland (U.K.): <i>Reducing youth homelessness in times of budgetary constraints: the case of Scotland</i></li> </ul>
12:15 – 13:00	LIFE EXPERIENCES: 3 to 5 young people will present their experiences
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Parallel Working Groups
	<p><b>1. Housing solutions for young homeless people</b> Moderator: Niamh Randall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaisa Tuuteri, Finnish Youth Housing Association (FIN): <i>Housing-led approach to youth homelessness</i></li> <li>Mélanie Rousset, Union Habitat Jeune (FR): <i>What have we learnt from Le Foyer Model since its creation in 1950s?</i></li> <li>Maria-Jose Aldanas, Provivienda (ES): <i>Socializing the private rental sector: what potential for the young homeless?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>2. Social inclusion of young homeless people through employment</b> Moderator: Thomas Specht</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandra Tordova, Proti Prudu (SK): <i>Selling street magazines as a way into the labour market</i></li> <li>Brigita Jankauskaite, Vilnius Caritas (LT): <i>Promoting active inclusion for young homeless people</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hans Geleynse, Stichting Zienn (NL): <i>Applying a global approach to youth homelessness: The House for Youth in Leeuwarden</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>3. How to overcome mental health problems among young homeless people?</b> Moderator: Kjell Larsson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Val Keen, Depaul U.K. (U.K.): <i>Meeting to the physical and mental health needs of young homeless people</i></li> <li>Panos Vostanis, University of Leicester (GR): <i>Mental health interventions and services for homeless children and families</i></li> <li>Antonio Bento, Psychiatric Hospital Centre of Lisbon (PT): <i>Most common mental health issues and challenges that young homeless people are facing and which treatment to apply: the case of Portugal</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. Supporting young people leaving care and prevent them to become homeless:</b> Moderator: Robert Aldridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sabina Nicolae, SamuSocial (RO): <i>Challenges to overcome when leaving care: the case of Romania</i></li> <li>Mike Allen, Focus Ireland (IE): <i>Helping young people moving out of care</i></li> <li>Duncan Dunlop, Who Cares Scotland (U.K.): <i>Care leavers need a home not just a house</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>5. Empowerment and participation of young homeless people</b> Moderator: Danny Lescrauwaet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cathy Weatherald, Cardboard Citizens (U.K.): <i>Theatre and performing arts as effective means to empower the young homeless</i></li> <li>Bibi Agger, UDENFOR (DK): <i>Incorporating digital technologies in youth social work</i></li> <li>Anna Kogut, Zwerfjongeren (NL): <i>How to increase the level of participation of homeless youth on policy making?</i></li> </ul>
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:30	Parallel Working Groups
	<p><b>6. Impact of public youth protection/ care on homelessness</b> Moderator: Peter Bakos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marie-Cécile Renoux, ATD Quart-Monde (EU): <i>Supporting vulnerable families to prevent children being taken into care</i></li> <li>Itte Van Hecke, Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk (BE): <i>Specific policy measures targeting care leavers and preventing them to become homeless: the case of Belgium</i></li> <li>Geoffrey Shannon, Special Rapporteur on Child Protection (IE): <i>After-care until 21 years: the case of Ireland</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>7. Prevention of homelessness: how to effectively focus on vulnerable youth?</b> Moderator: Stefano Galliani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sofie Eichner, StadtRaumKonzept (DE) : <i>Preventing youth homelessness in rural areas : the case of Northrhine-Westfalia</i></li> <li>Dr Paula Mayock, Trinity College Dublin (IE): <i>Youth homelessness strategy in Ireland: preventive measures</i></li> <li>City of Madrid (ES): <i>Preventing young people becoming homeless</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>8. Specific needs and effective support to homeless families and children</b> Moderator: André Gachet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renate Kitzman, Volkshilfe Wien (AT): <i>Responding effectively to family needs: the City of Vienna</i></li> <li>Erwan Le Mener, Observatoire du Samu Social de Paris (FR): <i>Massive increase in families among the homeless population: the case of France</i></li> <li>Andrew McCullough, Railway children (U.K.): <i>Reducing risk taking and improve wellbeing by addressing the causes for running away</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>9. Street culture and risk behaviour as factors of youth homelessness</b> Moderator: Ian Tilling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sarah Johnsen, University of York (U.K.): <i>Multiple exclusion and risk behaviour as</i></li> </ul>

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	<p><i>a pathway to homelessness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christophe Blanchard, Université Paris 13 (FR): <i>Young homeless people with dogs: companionship and factor of exclusion</i></li> <li>• MONAR Association (PL): <i>Helping young people with drug addiction problems</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>10. Addressing youth homelessness among migrants</b> Moderator: Sonia Olea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cristina Avonto, Progetto Tenda (IT): <i>Accompanying the minor asylum seekers to on the path towards social inclusion and autonomy</i></li> <li>• Bea Schramm, Diakonie Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz (DE): <i>“Between wagon camp and street music: how Berlin deals with youth homelessness among migrants</i></li> <li>• Dámaris Barajas, RED ACOGE (ES): <i>Preventing young migrants becoming homeless</i></li> </ul>
17:30 – 18:00	Closing session: Panel discussion: <i>What actions can be taken at EU level to address youth homelessness?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freek Spinnewijn, Director of FEANTSA</li> <li>• Lieve Fransen, DG EMPL, European Commission (tbc)</li> <li>• Pascal Lejeune, DG EAC, European Commission (tbc)</li> <li>• James Higgins, Youth Forum (tbc)</li> </ul>

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