



FEANTSA Policy Statement

The Council of Ministers for Social Affairs sends key message to the Spring European Council 2005: *“Treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness is a key priority”*

The EU Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers (EPSCO) met on 3 and 4 March 2005 to prepare its key messages on the mid-term review of the strategy for the Spring European Council meeting taking place on 22 and 23 March. The Council's message is very clear: it believes the social aspect of the Lisbon Strategy should focus on 6 priority actions which essentially aim at combating the deep causes of poverty and exclusion. The treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness is one of the 6 priority actions.

Employment and Social Affairs Ministers from 25 EU countries and Mr Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities agreed at the 3-4 March [meeting](#) that it was necessary to stress economic growth and job creation under the Lisbon Strategy however “without neglecting to provide a framework of action on social protection and inclusion”. The EPSCO Council calls on the Spring European Council to focus on 6 priority actions in the area of social inclusion:

- Prevention of child poverty
- Supporting the caring capacity of families
- Promoting the equality of men and women and reconciling work and family life
- The improvement of social services
- **Treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness**
- The development of new approaches to the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants

FEANTSA (European Federation of national organisations working with the homeless) acknowledges and welcomes the EPSCO Council's message to the Spring European Council. President Barroso's Communication on the revised Lisbon Strategy states that “the challenge is to define a strategy that addresses areas where Europe is not performing well”. The Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs acknowledge that homelessness is an urgent and growing problem in the Enlarged EU, and treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness is clearly an area where Europe needs to take further and immediate concrete action.

FEANTSA would like to make a concrete contribution to follow up on this priority action by setting up a European partnership to combat homelessness under the Lisbon Strategy. As the representative of more than 100 homeless service providers and housing associations in 29 European countries, FEANTSA has taken big steps to reinforce the EU social inclusion process. FEANTSA works with the European Commission, the European Parliament, national and local authorities, European and national NGOs, and researchers to improve the fight against homelessness. The national member organisations of FEANTSA can provide real expertise, ensure the implementation of EU objectives at local level, and deliver on making such a European partnership a reality. “Simplifying and streamlining Lisbon” (emphasised in the Communication on the revised Lisbon Strategy) also means clarifying the roles of the different actors within the EU policy-making process. This would be a good opportunity to give European and national NGOs a place in the Open Method of Coordination and the Lisbon Strategy – not just as voices of civil society, but as real actors. FEANTSA proposes itself as facilitator of the OMC on issues related to homelessness by involving all relevant partners.

**FEANTSA
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