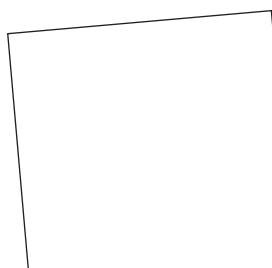


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The European Journal of Homelessness provides a critical analysis of policy and practice on homelessness in Europe for policy makers, practitioners, researchers and academics. The aim is to stimulate debate on homelessness and housing exclusion at the European level and to facilitate the development of a stronger evidential base for policy development and innovation. The journal seeks to give international exposure to significant national, regional and local developments and to provide a forum for comparative analysis of policy and practice in preventing and tackling homelessness in Europe. The journal will also assess the lessons for Europe, which can be derived from policy, practice and research from elsewhere.

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Editorial

Fostering robust debates on the policies and practices that can end homelessness are central to the founding principles of the *European Journal of Homelessness*, and we hope this latest edition of the Journal provides our diverse audience with information and perspectives that can inform their practices and policy making.

A key topic of discussion over the past year has been the applicability of Housing First in the member states of the European Union, and for those convinced of its applicability, how to translate the principles of Housing First into practice, and in particular, how significant fidelity to original New York model is in achieving successful outcomes. The publication of the *Housing First Europe* report (Busch-Geertsema, 2013) in June and the hosting of a conference on this topic in Amsterdam in the same month was a significant milestone in debating Housing First in Europe. A further conference in September in Berlin on the topic of '*Housing First. What's Second?*' ensured that this critical dialogue was both maintained and expanded, whilst a third Housing First conference in Lisbon, attracting some 200 delegates in early December 2013, demonstrated the on-going interest amongst service providers and policy makers in policy and practice transfer. In addition a peer-review of the Danish Housing First Homelessness Strategy was held in Copenhagen in November.

These on-going debates on the utility of Housing First models for the member states of the European Union are judiciously reviewed by Pleace and Bretherton, who conclude that the increasingly robust evidence on the effectiveness of Housing First warrants widespread adoption across the EU. In Vol. 6(2) of the Journal, Maureen Crane and colleagues suggested that preparation for housing was helpful in sustaining tenancies and we include responses by Ingrid Sahlin, Ronni Michelle Greenwood, Ana Stefanic, Jeremy Swain and Volker Busch Geertsema to allow for a productive debate on the usefulness of preparing homeless people for housing in temporary accommodation, rather than placing them directly in housing. Nicholas Pleace and Deborah K. Padgett also respond to an earlier article in the Journal on the importance of consumer choice in Housing First and to what degree this represents a strategic governmentalisation tactic to ensure personal responsibility. Both Padgett and Pleace argue, with different emphases, that choice is important and can bring significant benefits to homeless people, but that all service provision models should be open to, and welcome constructive criticism.

Certainly, the up-date on the Housing First based Danish Homelessness Strategy by Lars Benjaminsen provides solid empirical evidence for the effectiveness of a Housing First based approach to ending homelessness, and outlines a clear methodology for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of Housing First type responses to homelessness. This review notes that while the overall extent of homelessness increased in Denmark between 2009 and 2012, this is attributed to both macro-structural factors on the one hand, and practice provision on the other. Significantly, the municipalities that utilised Housing First approaches to homelessness showed only modest increases in general, compared to municipalities that utilised 'housing ready' models of practice. Crucial to this process, is of course how we define homelessness, and Kate Amore provides further sophisticated refinements to the ETHOS typology in her latest contribution to the Journal. Defining homelessness is not only an empirical project, but also a normative one, and the debate generated by the ETHOS typology is an excellent example of the reflective debates that are crucial to reaching a consensus on the definition and measurement of homelessness.

While an increasing number of member states are adopting Housing First / Housing Led policies, translating these, often national level, policies into practice, has proven in some cases to be problematic for operational and financial reasons. In her review of the Portuguese Homelessness Strategy, Isabel Baptista, traces the evolution of the Strategy and the substantial implementation difficulties to-date. Similarly, the O'Neill paper notes the difficulties of accessing sufficient good quality accommodation units when attempting to deliver housing first policies in Northern Ireland, as do Boroka Fehér and Ana Balogi in relation to Budapest. This is an emerging important topic of research, where detailed case studies of progress and blockages in implementing Housing First / Housing Led policies are required for policy learning and implementation practice.

Despite the progress made across the member states in adopting inclusive policies for homeless people, as Rita Bence and Tessza Udvarahelyi outline, policies of social exclusion utilising repressive criminal justice policies are also evident, as demonstrated in the case study of Hungary, where despite vigorous and compelling domestic and international opposition, it is now a criminal offence to live in public spaces across Hungary. Homeless people rough sleeping can now be fined, and if convicted twice within a six-month period, may be committed to jail. This blatant policy of repression is fortunately relatively rare across member states (for a recent overview, see Fernández Evangelista and Jones, 2013), but the thoughtful responses from Don Mitchell, Steve Gaetz, Marie-Eve Sylvestre, Evelyn Dyb, Joe Doherty and Jürgen van Mahs to an article by Eoin O'Sullivan in Vol 7(1) of the Journal on this topic shows that a range of more subtle and invidious mechanisms of repression

are also evident. Such subtle policies can include regulations on having a 'local connection' to access to homelessness services as shown by Michel Planijie and Mathijus Tuynman in their case study of the Netherlands.

The implementation of repressive policies for homeless people in Hungary is largely domestic in origin, although some cite the broader trans-national influence of neo-liberalism, but what is happening in Greece, as outlined by Olga Theodorikaakou, Alexandra Aalamanou and Kyriakos Katsadoros is largely driven by external actors. The impact of the 'austerity measures' imposed on the Greek population in producing a new generation of homeless people is a timely reminder of the structural basis for much contemporary homelessness. When social safety nets disappear, immiserization, marginalisation and homelessness will result. Policies that promote active inclusion rather than criminalisation and exclusion achieve more sustainable and ultimately just outcomes, as demonstrated by Simon Guntner and Jamie Harding in their comparison of active inclusion measures in Newcastle in England and Hamburg in Germany.

The degree to which an enhanced role for the European Commission would strengthen evidence based solutions to homelessness and promote inclusionary policy instruments is dealt with by Liz Gosme in her article on the 'Europeanisation' of homelessness policies. She argues that tackling homelessness is now an integrated part of social inclusion agenda at an EU level, and that a number of countries, far from complaining of EU interference in social policy matters, are calling on the EU to support national governments in their efforts to address social issues such as homelessness. Achieving progress on homelessness across the European Union was the basis for hosting a meeting of Ministers with responsibility for homelessness, under the auspices of the Irish Presidency, in the Irish College in Leuven in March. Aidan Culhane and Niamh Randall provide a unique insight into both the process of achieving consensus amongst diverse member states, and the tangible outcomes of the meeting in agreeing key principles in such areas as knowledge sharing, funding, research and innovation and advice.

One of the difficulties in achieving an EU consensus on the most appropriate and effective policies to end homelessness, is that different member states are at varying levels in terms of their knowledge of the nature and extent of homelessness and their policy evolution. For some member states, ensuring that large numbers of people are not required to sleep on the streets drives very practical responses to homelessness, often in the form of large scale congregate facilities. For other member states, the policy priority is how to close such congregate facilities. To assist the development of knowledge on the extent and nature of homelessness in member states with a limited tradition of research, the Journal has sought to provide

