

In 2017, FEANTSA published our last magazine on LGBTIQ homelessness, which was the launch pad for an amazing new area of work for our network. A lot has changed in that time, which paints two contrasting stories on LGBTIQ rights in Europe.

On the one hand Europe is becoming a more dangerous place for LGBTIQ people. According to ILGA Europe, 2022 was the most violent year in Europe for LGBTIQ people in over a decade, with rising attacks, murders and two terrorist attacks on the LGBTIQ community. This doesn't happen in a vacuum. These attacks are fuelled by wider hate speech. Anti LGBTIQ voices are emboldened by such hate speech creating a more hostile environment for LGBTIQ people.

On the other hand, when it comes to homelessness, there is a different story emerging. The homeless sector has made huge strides in the past 5 years. When we published our last LGBTIQ themed magazine there was little to no understanding of LGBTIQ homelessness in Europe. But today we have research that maps the challenges of working on the topic for both LGBTIQ and homeless organisations, we have delivered trainings to make services more inclusive, we have data from a European agency demonstrating the scale of LGBTIQ homelessness and at national level there is a growing level of research which in turn is leading to specialised services and new policies at the member state level.

The articles in this magazine paint a picture of hope and progress, while there is still a lot to be done to improve homeless services for LGBTIQ people, we can also point to our successes, and inspire organisations to deliver safer and more inclusive services.

Writing for ILGA-Europe Brian Finnegan highlights the worsening socio-economic situation that LGBTIQ people find themselves when it comes to discrimination in the job market, difficult making ends meet and the over-representation of the LGBTIQ community, particularly for trans and intersex people, among the homeless population.

The research from Denmark highlights how experiences of homophobia and transphobia can push people away from services and identifies several barriers LGBTIQ people face in accessing the right supports. Similar research conducted in Ireland has showcased the importance of safe and empowering spaces to provide supports and the value of research to shape the design of trainings to make services more inclusive.

While services return to normal post-COVID, we look at the lessons learned from COVID, with Canadian research on how LGBTIQ youth experiencing homelessness, or risk of homelessness, were negatively impacted by restrictions, giving us further insights into how to cater to the needs of LGBTIQ youth within services.

EDITORIAL



By **Robbie Stakelum**, Policy officer, FEANTSA

Despite growing anti-trans rhetoric and hate speech, Germany has developed national guidance for supporting trans and intersex people within in services, and in this magazine, we have showcased how a woman's homeless service continues to support trans women by putting these guidelines into practice.

Even in countries like Poland which have imposed 'LGBTI free zones', we have seen the power of city led and local initiatives to help protect LGBTIQ people experiencing homelessness. While Ljubljana Pride Association demonstrates the power of community organising, as they lead the charge in creating short term housing solutions for LGBTIQ people while delivering trainings to make existing services safer and more inclusive.

We know from speaking with frontline workers that the LGBTIQ community are not just over-represented within homeless services but also among sex workers, and for many organisations this is a difficult topic to engage in. The article from Alias shines a light on how to support LGBTIQ sex workers who are also experiencing hidden homelessness or housing instability in a non-judgemental and harm reducing way.

Behind all the data and research and community organising, we also have the story of Momo, a client at Le Refuge in Brussels, which is an organisation supporting LGBTIQ people experiencing homelessness. Take the time to read Momo's story, which demonstrates from their first-hand experience how important safe and inclusive services are in ensuring people have the supports to not just exit homelessness but to have hope, community and to feel empowered.

While the outlook for LGBTIQ people in Europe is complex and, in some contexts, perhaps even negative, my hope is that the articles shared in this edition inspire your work and showcase how as a sector we can improve our response and make the lives of all LGBTIQ people feel respected and valued as we support their exit from homelessness.

