Seminar context
The EU is increasingly intervening (directly or indirectly) in the area of social services, including homeless services, namely through the adoption of EU legislation on public procurement of services, on State aid rules, and on the establishment of a European market of services. Moreover, these services are facing mounting pressure as a result of budgetary and austerity measures, leading to funding cuts in many parts of Europe. There is increasing interest therefore in new ways of working and new forms of governance, as local organisations adapt to the new emerging economic, welfare and political context in their country.

Seminar objectives
1. To reflect on different forms of organisation and provision of homeless services across the EU and the impact of European legislation on their work.
2. To give examples of different models used to provide homeless services, with concrete/practical information for local organisations attending the seminar, looking at the advantages/disadvantages of each model, as well as the financing of these different service provision models.

Homeless services
These are a mix of emergency, resettlement and support services (health, employment, training, etc). However, social services working with homeless people are still predominantly services providing short-term accommodation (shelters, hostels, temporary accommodation) and support (non-residential day centres, outreach services, advice services) which try to find adequate and integrated solutions to prevent people from entering a chronic cycle of homelessness.

Homeless service provision
The governance of homeless service provision could be classified into the following three broad models:
1. “In-house” model – Where homeless services are provided by and within local authority departments, hence exercising supervision over the service as it does over one of its own departments. This is not so common in Europe, but is found in some Scandinavian countries and Eastern European countries.
2. Partnership model - A system of delegation where the local authority works through partnership agreements with not-for-profit homeless services which are rooted in local communities part of the so-called ‘third sector’, which is separate from the public and business sectors. This is the more dominant model of homeless service provision in Europe.
3. Market-based model - Market principles are sometimes used in homeless service provision, ranging from the creation of quasi-markets to the use of competitive tendering procedures to purchase a service from external organisations, often not-for-profit organisations but increasingly commercial organisations as well. This is not so common but is emerging in some EU countries.

Seminar programme
The seminar will last one full day (9h00-16h00) and will be divided into one introductory session and 3 plenary sessions discussing aspects of the three broad models referred to above.

References
-Austrian government (2008), Social Services of General Interest
-Busch-Geertsema et al (2010), Homelessness and Homeless Policies in Europe: Lessons from Research
-EASPD (2010), Public Procurement in the EU: A lever for quality of social services?
-Edgar et al (2004), Service Provision for Homeless People in Europe
-European Commission (2006), Social services of general interest in the European Union
-European Commission (2008), Biennial report on social services of general interest
-FEANTSA (2009), Quality in social services: The perspective of social services working with homeless people
programme

6th European seminar on local homeless strategies – Brussels, 17 June 2011

“Governance of homeless service provision at local level: One-size-fits-all or diversity of models across Europe? ”

PROGRAMME

Seminar Chair: FEANTSA President, René Kneip

9.00-9.30 Introduction

Welcome by Committee of the Regions and EU context of the seminar

Rethinking homeless service provision in an economic recession
Karen Murphy – Head of Services - Irish Council for Social Housing (Ireland)

European overview of different models of homeless service provision
Prof. Isobel Anderson – Chair in Housing Studies - University of Stirling (UK)

9.30 -11.00 In-house model – Local authorities as homeless service providers

Homeless services in Danish cities - Municipal service provision and the local housing context
Lars Benjaminsen – Researcher - Research Unit on Social Policy and Welfare Service - SFI (Denmark)

Leading by default when the third sector has traditionally played a small role in tackling homelessness
Aldis Strapcans – Policy coordinator – Welfare Department - Riga city council (Latvia)

Providing in-house homeless services to simplify the policy process and respect the local context
Emmanuel Cornelius – Social Development Service - Esch-sur-Alzette city council (Luxembourg)

Response: Stephen Barnett – Senior Policy Officer - European Social Network

Coffee break

11.30-13.00 Partnership model – Service providers rooted in local communities

A harmonised national framework vs diversity in the implementation of local models
Paolo Pezzana – President of fioPSD (Italy)

Municipality, Service providers and Service users on an equal footing
Ing. Jiří Růžička and Ing. Petr Kozel - Head of local homeless hostel and Policy coordinator City of Vsetín (Czech Republic)

NGOs take the initiative and work as partners with local authorities to provide homeless services
Michel Mercadié – « Jardins de Cocagne » - Besançon (France)

Response: Concetta Cultrera – Policy coordinator on social services - European Commission

Lunch break

14.30-16.00 Market-based model – Market elements in homeless service provision

Use of formal tender procedures to ensure best value for taxpayers’ money
Robert Aldridge – Chief Executive of the Scottish Council for Single Homeless (UK)

Service provider competition for homeless clients within a restricted market - the case of Berlin
Prof. Dr. Susanne Gerull – Researcher - Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin, University of Applied Sciences (Germany)

An alternative to competitive tendering in purchasing housing services for homeless people
Maria Degerman – Project Manager – Social Services Department - Helsinki city council (Finland)

Response: Miriana Giraldi – Policy Officer - European Association of Service Providers for people with Disabilities

16.00 Conclusions & Drinks reception
Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA Director