Housing Rights Seminar
4 December 2015
11:00 to 4:00

Doughty Street Chambers
53-54 Doughty St, London WC1N 2LS

European migrant homelessness in UK
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_ In UK, responses to European migrant homelessness are changing; progressive responses are less and less taken. There is good practice, but no good policy. There is higher risk of physical violence.

_ Crisis provides help to European homeless migrants, despite European Union's and United Kingdom's policies: solutions on Economic Social and Cultural Rights are searched for, regardless of nationality. But there is a split in the homelessness sector, about helping European migrants with or without focus on deportation. For instance, about the scheme to help pay deposits for rent.

_ About the labour market: Most European migrants find work; but the trafficking issue is important. We have to deal with illegal employment, but there is no agenda on that.
The debate about "reconnections"/"connection": can't we try to do this responsibly? And when people are waiting – need to ensure a level of dignity in emergency shelters. In the "reconnection" concept, shelter/access to hospital is denied (except for families with children, taken into care).

_ There are no European minimum standards for preventing destitution; and UK policies' method is to determine cut in benefits. The lack of joined up approach to homelessness policy in UK is the main problem.

_ New to come: the Right to Rent. Landlords must check papers of all tenants and occupiers.

_ Next policies: government will try to tackle modern slavery. For people who can/want to work, government wants to revise social benefits for 4 years. Moreover, a new criteria on language knowledge (English test) has led to massive unemployment of European migrants (in building trade for example), and now there is a labour shortage.

_ Criminalization of rough sleeping, begging: local councils will be able to charge any migrants/homeless because of rough sleeping.

We need some form of progressive response.