



Frontline agencies in partnership

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Dear Member of the European Parliament

Written declaration on ending street homelessness 0111/2007

We were delighted to learn that a written declaration on ending street homelessness was registered in the European Parliament last December. We warmly welcome this initiative to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Europe. I am writing to ask you to sign the declaration before the lapse date, which is **26 March 2008**.

As you may know, Homeless Link is the umbrella organisation for frontline services working to help people most at risk of homelessness in England. Our vision is a country free from homelessness. [Our Plan - Ending Homelessness: from Vision to Action](#) was launched in Parliament just over a year ago, with support from Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat frontbench spokespeople. It calls for an end to rough sleeping by 2012, when the eyes of the world will be on us. The Mayor of London has backed this ambition.

We are optimistic that this goal is achievable, given the very significant falls in rough sleeping already achieved. This success is thanks to a strong and effective partnership between government, the voluntary sector, and local authorities. It is an example that inspires and informs campaigners in countries where the problem has been continuing to grow. However, while an estimated 19,000 have left behind rough sleeping in London over the last ten years, new people end up on the streets. It can happen to people from all walks of life but also includes some of the most vulnerable people in our society who have multiple needs.

An issue that has particular relevance for the EU is the signs of a new group sleeping rough. Our research has found that 18% of rough sleepers in London are people who have come to the UK to work from east and central Europe but who have no recourse to public funds if things go wrong. We believe that citizens of Europe who move for work should have the right to social protection - to shelter over their heads, food and health care.

Recently the EU has acknowledged that homelessness should be tackled as a priority. This is an important first step, but we believe that much more can be done, both at EU and national level. The written declaration is an opportunity for the members of the European Parliament to add their voice to people across the EU who are seeking change for those who have greatest need for our help. We are confident you will want to lend your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jenny Edwards
Chief Executive