

European Parliament written declaration on ending street homelessness

Deadline: 25 March 2007

What is a written declaration? It is a tool for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to launch or re-launch the debate on a matter falling within the European Union's scope of activities. It consists of a text of max.200 words that can be launched by max.5 signatories.

Procedure: in order to be successful, a written declaration needs to be signed by at least half of the MEPs within a time limit of three months, or it will simply lapse. Once it has collected the required number of signatures – about 400 – it is then forwarded to the President and announced during a plenary session of the EP. Deadline for the declaration on street homelessness: 25 March 2008.

Content: the cross-party written declaration on ending street homelessness calls:

- on the Council to agree on an EU-wide commitment to end street homelessness by 2015;
- on the Commission to develop a European framework definition of homelessness, gather comparable and reliable statistical data, and provide annual updates on action taken and progress made in EU Member States towards ending homelessness;
- urges Member States to devise 'winter emergency plans' as part of a wider homelessness strategy.

It has been registered by Mary Lou MacDonald (GUE/NGL, Ireland) Claude Moraes (PES, United Kingdom), Jacek Protasiewicz (EPP-ED, Poland), Gérard Onesta (Greens/EFA, France) and Jean-Marie Beaupuy (ALDE, France), representing 5 different political groups.

To read the full text of the declaration click [here](#) (original version in English). To access other languages, click on the respective icons.

Why would/should MEPs sign the declaration?

Homelessness affects people across Europe. Despite a general agreement on the fact that every person has a right to have a secure, adequate and affordable place to live and that it is unacceptable that human beings are forced to live on the street due to the lack of adequate services, homelessness remains a shared reality in all EU Member States.

Homelessness and housing exclusion are a denial of fundamental rights. Street homelessness is possibly the most extreme form of poverty and exclusion. Whereas access to adequate housing and health can be considered as a precondition for the exercise of most other human rights, the concrete implementation of these and other rights remains unsatisfactory in many European countries.

Homelessness is complex and multifaceted: there is no unique or simple solution to it. Emergency policy measures aimed at tackling the most visible situations – street homelessness – are neither sufficient nor appropriate. Examples of integrated and effective policies do exist across Europe. Key features of successful policies include elements such as political commitment and leadership, public support, interagency work and involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including people who are homeless. Each of us has a role to play, including MEPs.

In recent years, the EU has gradually started to acknowledge that homelessness and housing exclusion needed to be tackled as a priority. At a moment where there is political momentum in different EU Member States and an increasing demand for further information, the EU has a major role to play in building better knowledge and encouraging mutual learning concerning policies, which have proved successful in combating housing exclusion and homelessness. This role should be taken seriously.

The European Parliament has many times shown consensus and political courage as concerns the respect and promotion of human rights within and outside the European Union. Several EP initiatives have called for measures aimed at tackling homelessness and housing exclusion. As the only directly-elected body of the European Union, it is important that the European Parliament sends once again a strong political signal towards other EU institutions, Member States and public opinion about its commitment to end the unacceptable situation faced by thousands of people living in the European Union.

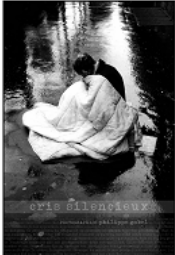
Finally, the declaration does not appear controversial, nor does it seem unrealistic in its demands. To successfully gather the required number of MEP signatures would strengthen the basis for the legitimate demands expressed in it and contribute to a renewed impetus in the fight against housing exclusion and homelessness in Europe.

What can you do? Give visibility to the written declaration (for instance by adding a sentence to your e-mails or referring to [FEANTSA's web site](#)) and take action by asking your MEP to sign the declaration. Also, you may encourage him/her to raise awareness among his/her colleagues. It takes 10 minutes, but it makes a difference!

Who are your national MEPs? To find out who are the Members of the European Parliament elected in your constituency, click on the following [map](#). If you would like to see by name and political group, click [here](#). Contact details are available on the individual web pages. If you know already an MEP and you would like FEANTSA to approach him/her, please let us know, as we usually follow EP activities (see dates of plenary sessions [here](#)).

Where can MEPs sign? Written declarations are printed and posted on a board at the entrance to the Chambers in Strasbourg and Brussels. They are also published on the [Parliament's website](#). The register is available for MEP signature during plenary sessions. When the plenary is not sitting MEPs can sign the declaration in room the Brussels buildings of the European Parliament PHS 02 A 019.

Further information: please do not hesitate to contact Stefania.delzotto@feantsa.org.

	<p>Picture by Philippe Gabel, from the exhibition "Cris silencieux", design and distribution by Zérane S. Girardeau (zerane@gmail.com).</p> <p>To be seen at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in February 2008.</p>
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Make a difference and help secure sufficient MEP support for the adoption of the written declaration!