



European Federation of National Organisations Working With the Homeless
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For Immediate Release

European Parliament Adopts Resolution Calling for an EU Homelessness Strategy

Following a plenary debate on homelessness between MEPs and the European Commission, the European Parliament has adopted a Resolution on an EU Homelessness Strategy.

Today, the European Parliament has adopted a Resolution (2013/2994(RSP)) on a European Union (EU) Homelessness Strategy. The Resolution was adopted by 349 votes to 45, with 113 abstentions. It urges the European Commission to follow up on numerous previous requests by European bodies.

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament itself have all previously called upon the European Commission to develop an EU strategy on homelessness. The Resolution adopted today urges the Commission to act on these requests and implement the strategy without further delay, advising that a high level expert group should be established to support the preparation and development of the strategy.

During the debate prior to the Resolution's adoption, László Andor, European Commissioner responsible for employment, social affairs and inclusion, said that the European Commission shares the opinion that homelessness represents one of the worst forms of poverty and social exclusion and that it has very negative consequences for society and for people affected. He confirmed that there has been an increase in poverty in Europe over the past few years, and that unprecedented levels of vulnerability among homeless people, young people, families and migrants in poverty have been reached.

Indeed, homelessness, the most extreme form of poverty and deprivation, continues to affect people in all EU Member States and has increased in recent years in virtually all EU Member States. Countries hit by the economic and financial crisis are witnessing an unprecedented increase in homelessness. It is urgent that something be done now to stem the tide. FEANTSA hopes that today's debate and the adoption of another EP Resolution in favour of an EU Homelessness Strategy will mark the beginning of more ambition from the EU and its Member States in the fight against homelessness.

Homelessness is a clear priority of EU poverty policy under the EU 2020 Strategy and the Social Investment Package. It is receiving attention under the EU Semester, with several Member States including it as a priority in their 2012 and 2013 National Reform Programmes. More and more Member States have a homelessness strategy, and could further develop their policies with European support. Those not yet having implemented a strategy could benefit from European support and coordination to do so. With renewed efforts from the EU and Member States, an EU homelessness strategy could support better progress towards the Europe 2020 Strategy headline target of lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Responsibility for tackling homelessness lies with Member States, whereas the EU has a complementary, supporting role. However, a stronger role for the European Commission is possible within its current areas of competence whilst still respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

The Resolution thus calls upon Member States to develop comprehensive homelessness strategies which are housing-led, include a strong focus on prevention and take into account the guidance set down in the Commission Communication on the SIP, "Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion" and the Commission Staff Working Document "Confronting Homelessness in Europe". It also calls on Member States to strengthen the inclusion of homelessness in their National Reform Programmes. Equally, it calls on the Commission to consider references to homelessness in the Country Specific Recommendations for Member States where urgent.

FEANTSA hopes the European Commission will take this new call for an EU Homelessness Strategy into account and is keen to engage in its development and implementation.

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Notes for Editors:

1. FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless. It is an umbrella of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe. www.feantsa.org

■ European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless AISBL

Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri AISBL

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2. Resolution on an EU Homelessness Strategy: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2014-0008&language=EN>
3. Social Investment Package (SIP)
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>
4. Communication on SIP <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0083:FIN:FR:PDF>
5. SIP Policy Guidance on Homelessness <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SWD:2013:0042:FIN:EN:PDF>
6. Previous EP request for EU homelessness strategy <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0383&language=EN&ring=B7-2011-0475>
7. 'Time to Act' Policy Paper on why now is the right time to have an EU Homelessness Strategy:
<http://feantsa.org/spjp.php?article496&lang=en>
8. EU 2020 Strategy http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm and targets http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm