



THE
2014-2019
EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT'S
RECORD ON
HOMELESSNESS

A FEANTSA Report



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FOREWORD



Homelessness and housing exclusion are on the increase in Europe. Millions of citizens are being left behind by inadequate policy responses, with knock-on effects on social cohesion and economic growth. The tools required to deal with these challenges already exist and the EU has a crucial role to play in finding solutions.

In 2010, the European Union committed to lifting 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. By the European Parliamentary elections in 2014, homelessness was rapidly increasing across the continent. Following the elections, FEANTSA called on the new Chairs of the European Parliamentary Groups, who had voted in favour of a Resolution on EU Homelessness Strategy in 2011, to use their new positions to follow-up on their calls and to act as catalysts in putting a strategic approach to end homelessness in place.

FEANTSA has long seen the European Parliament as a crucial ally in the fight against homelessness. The current mandate has seen a wide range of positive action by the Parliament in tackling homelessness. This report will survey the outputs of the EP in relation to homelessness and show the extent to which this is a cross-party issue.

Representatives from the four largest political groups have asked Written Questions, co-authored a Written Declaration and been the rapporteur for a Report which has related to homelessness. Indeed, what emerges from the report is that support for European action on homelessness is not a left versus right issue, but rather a question of pro-EU versus Euroscepticism.

MEPs have also organised a wide range of events and initiatives to support the fight against homelessness, as will be detailed further in the report.

Such activities signal an intent by the European Parliament to tackle homelessness.

However, it is now vital that as the EU draws up its post-2020 agenda, the fight against homelessness is at the heart of the ambition for a social “triple A” with “no one left behind”. That is why this report will finish with 5 recommendations for action for the new 2019-2024 European Parliament.

Freek Spinnewijn
FEANTSA Director



RESOLUTIONS

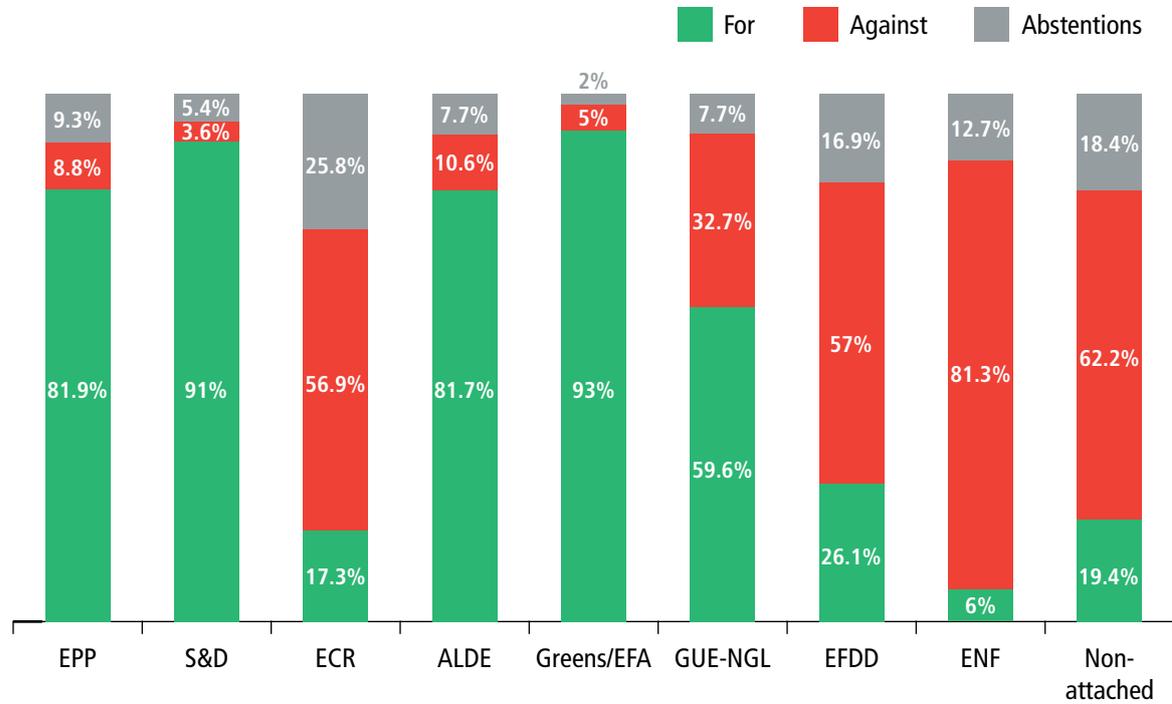


Throughout the 2014-2019 term, the European Parliament's commitment to tackling homelessness across Europe has been clear, with numerous relevant resolutions having been passed which reflect the Parliament's concern about the challenge posed by increasing homelessness across Europe. Since 2014, the Parliament has passed 19 resolutions with a specific mention of homelessness; with topics ranging from gender inequality, fundamental rights, children, disability, marginalised communities, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Semester, Roma, employment, poverty and urban policy.¹

These calls reflect the changing profile of homeless people, with women, young people, people with a migration background, the working poor becoming increasingly numerous among the homeless population. These calls also emanate from across party lines, with all of the main parties in the European Parliament having fielded a rapporteur for a resolution related to homelessness. This makes it clear that solidarity toward the homeless of Europe is a non-partisan issue.

¹ See bibliography on p. 20 for full list

AVERAGE ALIGNMENT OF PARTY VOTES FOR RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS IN 2014-2019



The graph above charts the alignment of individual votes from each party for each of the 19 resolutions that passed through the Parliament. As it clearly shows, there has

been overwhelmingly positive support for the resolutions from most of the largest political groups, with support stemming from all sides of the political spectrum.

FOCUS ON...



Women's Homelessness

In 2017, the EU began accession to the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and in September 2017, the European Parliament endorsed this by a large majority. 2017 was the European Year of focus on violence against women. This has helped put women's homelessness, which is often directly caused by violence, in the spotlight in a range of EP resolutions. In the first half of 2016, two Resolutions within the space of six weeks called for more research to be done into women's homelessness. The [first](#), the [Resolution on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs](#), was adopted by the Committee of Employment and

Social Affairs and stated that "more research is required on the rates and causes of women losing or leaving their homes." The [second Resolution, on poverty: a gender perspective](#) was adopted by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality which reasserted the need to "undertake research into female homelessness as the phenomenon is inadequately captured in current data."



Youth Homelessness

Throughout the 2014-2019 Parliamentary term, the profile of homeless people across Europe has been changing. Young people are now in a more precarious position than ever before, with 30% of homeless people reported to be under the age of 25. The European Parliament has recognised this changing demographic and has worked to address these shocking figures, and to protect those who already find themselves on the streets. In February 2016, the [Resolution on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs](#)

recognised the growing precarity of Europe's youth and called for recognition of initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee to help prevent the expanding figure of young people facing poverty and housing exclusion. Similarly, the 2017 [Resolution on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#) recognises the need for further research into abuse of vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness, particularly those in the LGBTI+ community.

Marginalised Communities

Across the EU, minority communities are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

The European Parliament, through its resolutions, has clearly recognised this systemic prejudice and has worked hard to help the social integration of marginal communities, such as Roma Gypsies. The 2015 resolution on [cohesion policy and marginalised communities](#) recognises the frequency of housing exclusion among

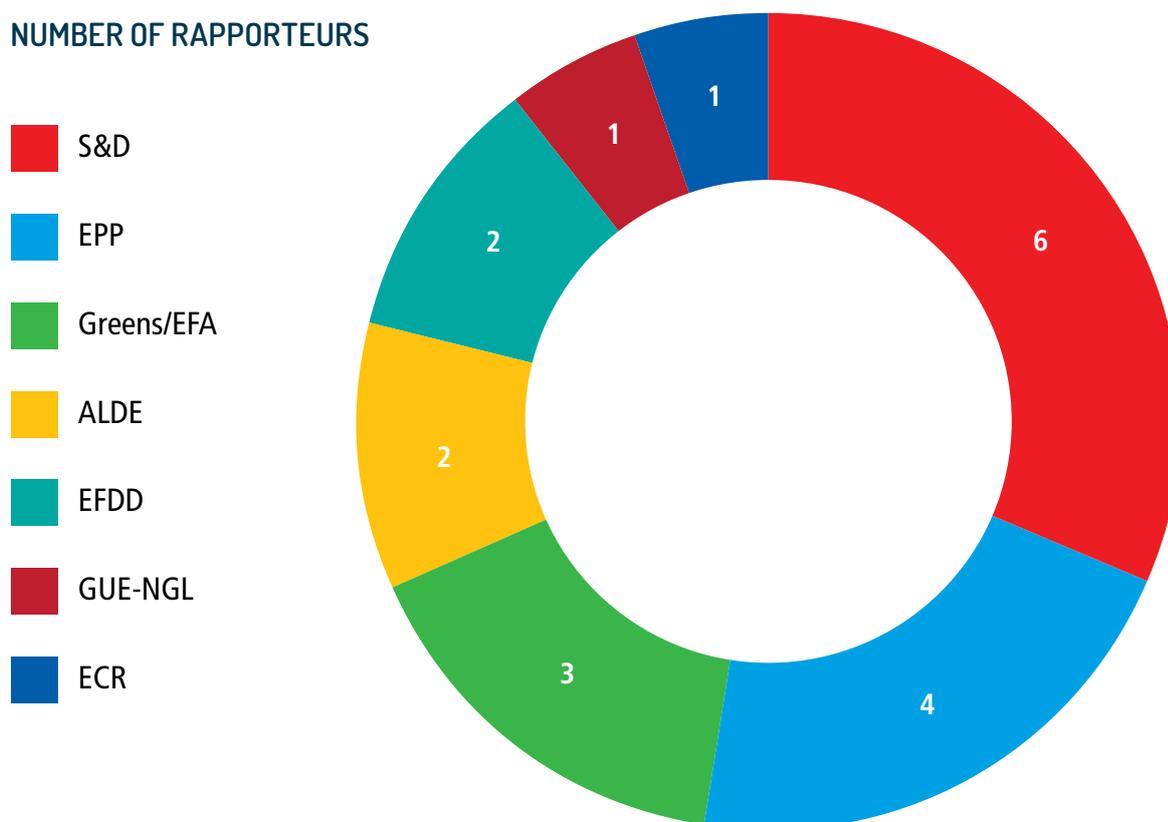
marginalised communities including refugees, asylum seekers, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, including Roma. Similarly, the European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2017 on [fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration](#) in the EU was structured around combatting anti-Gypsyism, quoting the often discriminatory practices that the Roma community face on the housing market, making housing instability a frequent part of Roma's lives.

RAPPOORTEURS



The level of cross-party support for action within the Parliament to help end homelessness is also reflected in the rapporteurs for each of the resolutions produced. As can be seen in the graph below, seven out of the eight political groups have had at least one rapporteur compose a report that referenced homelessness and concern about its growth throughout the EU 28.

NUMBER OF RAPPOORTEURS





EXTENT OF CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT



The following is a list of the votes on resolutions passed through the parliament with the greatest amount of cross-party support. The content of the resolutions varies, but, in essence, they all centre around the idea of protecting the rights of the most vulnerable in our society, who are often themselves the most often at risk of experiencing homelessness. Below you will find the 5 resolutions, accompanied by the text of the resolution relating to homelessness, as well as graphs outlining the make-up of the political groups voting.

European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 on REDUCING INEQUALITIES WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON CHILD POVERTY

24 November 2015



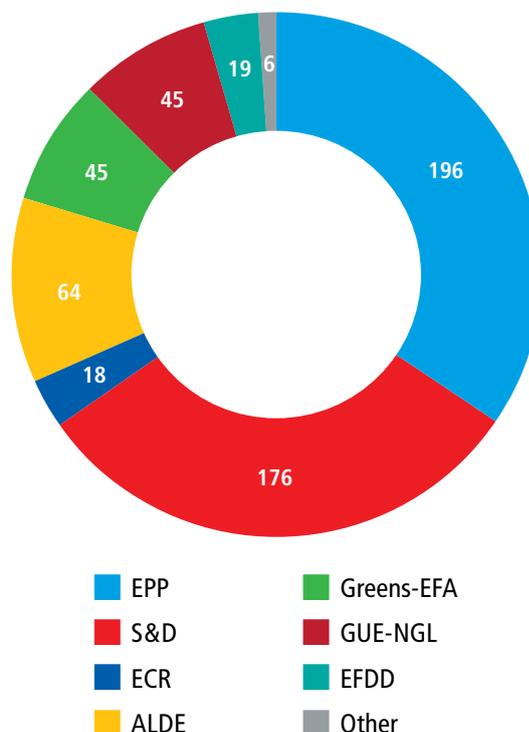
Rapporteur ► **Inês Cristina Zuber, GUE/NGL**

Q. whereas children and their parents, foster parents and caregivers must be protected from discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or other status, and whereas children from vulnerable population groups are more at risk of marginalisation, poverty and social exclusion, as confirmed by the latest reports by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, which highlight an increase in women, young people and families with children (especially migrant families) taken into homeless shelters; whereas large single-income families are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion, owing to deteriorating national wage policies and social protection systems as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis;

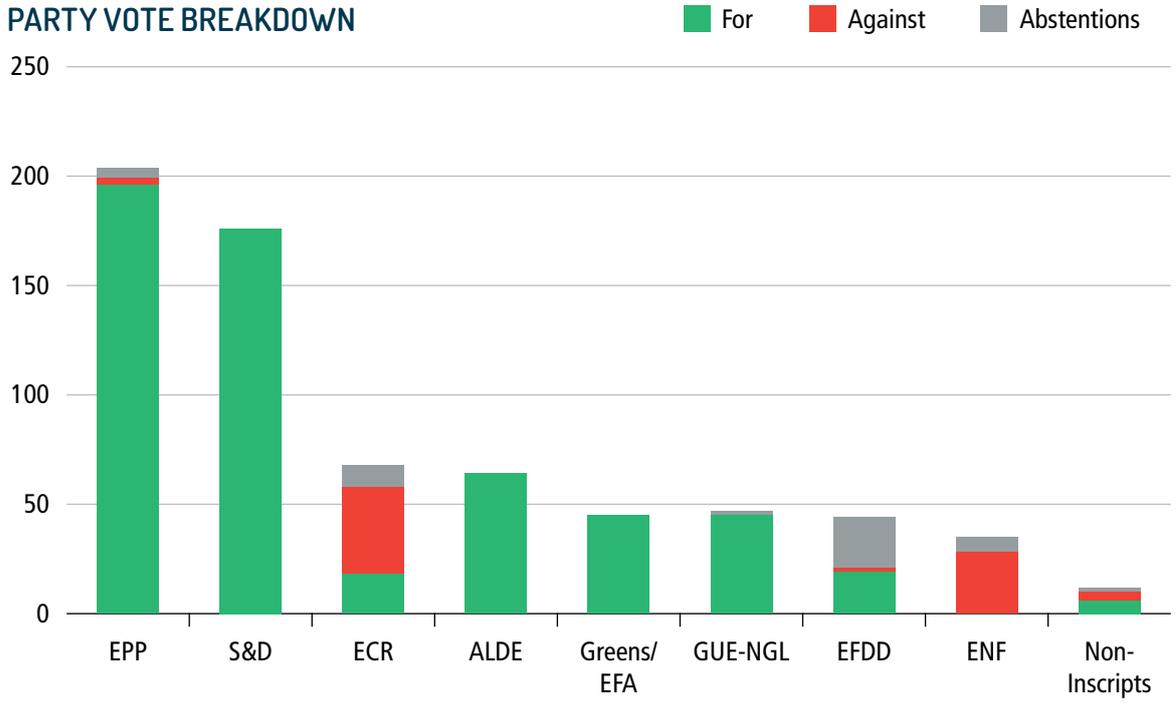
[...]

It should be noted that 11% of children live in families that spend more than 40% of their disposable income on housing costs (in Greece this figure is 38%) and the latest reports from the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless state that accommodation for the homeless is increasingly occupied by women, young people and families with children, with migrant children being over-represented. We call on Member States to eliminate the possibility of seizure and foreclosure on houses when families do not have enough income to guarantee their livelihood, or on tax foreclosure processes.

VOTES FOR RESOLUTION



PARTY VOTE BREAKDOWN



European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 on COHESION POLICY AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

24 November 2015



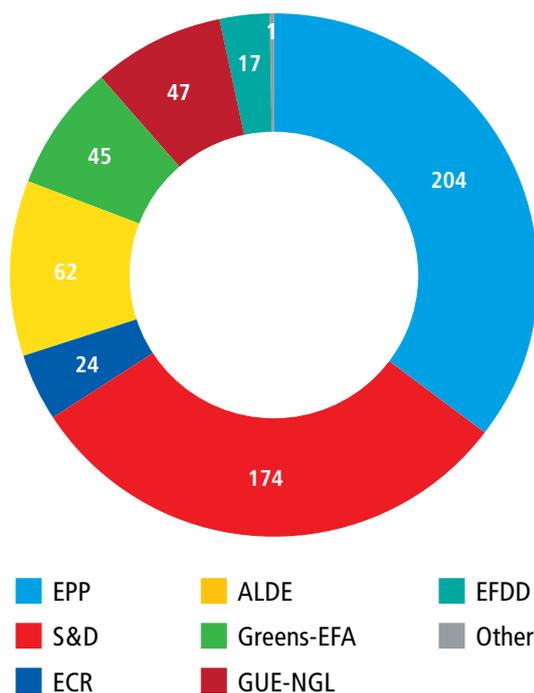
Rapporteur ► Terry Reinke, Greens-EFA

P. whereas common characteristics shared by marginalised communities include communities of places, such as marginalised communities living in rural areas and disadvantaged neighbourhoods; communities of interests, such as refugees and asylum seekers, and ethnic and linguistic minorities; and people with disabilities, elderly people, homeless as well as indigenous peoples; whereas different types of marginalised communities share common difficulties and all suffer from multiple forms of stigmatisation and discrimination;

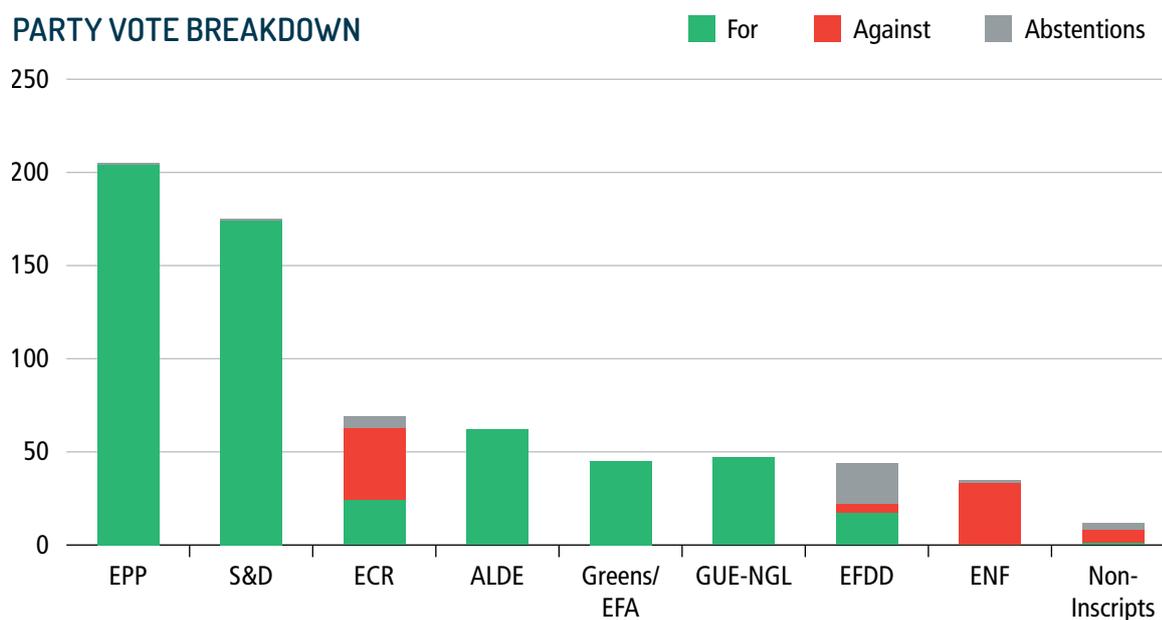
[...]

37. Highlights that housing exclusion, homelessness, education exclusion and unemployment are often key elements of marginalisation; emphasises, therefore, the importance of integrated housing, educational and employment interventions, in favour of marginalised communities;

VOTES FOR RESOLUTION



PARTY VOTE BREAKDOWN



European Parliament resolution of 30 November 2017 on
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN DISABILITY STRATEGY

30 November 2017



Rapporteur ► Helga Stevens, ECR

P. whereas a considerable proportion of the four million people experiencing homelessness every year have disabilities, having been largely overlooked as a target group of the UNCRPD and the EU Disability Strategy;

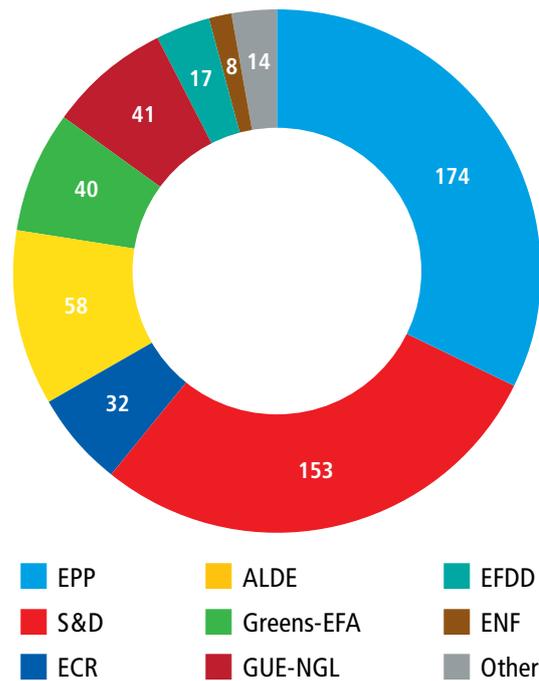
[...]

72. Urges the Member States to ensure that deinstitutionalisation never leads to homelessness for persons with disabilities because of a lack of adequate and/or accessible housing for delivering care in the community;

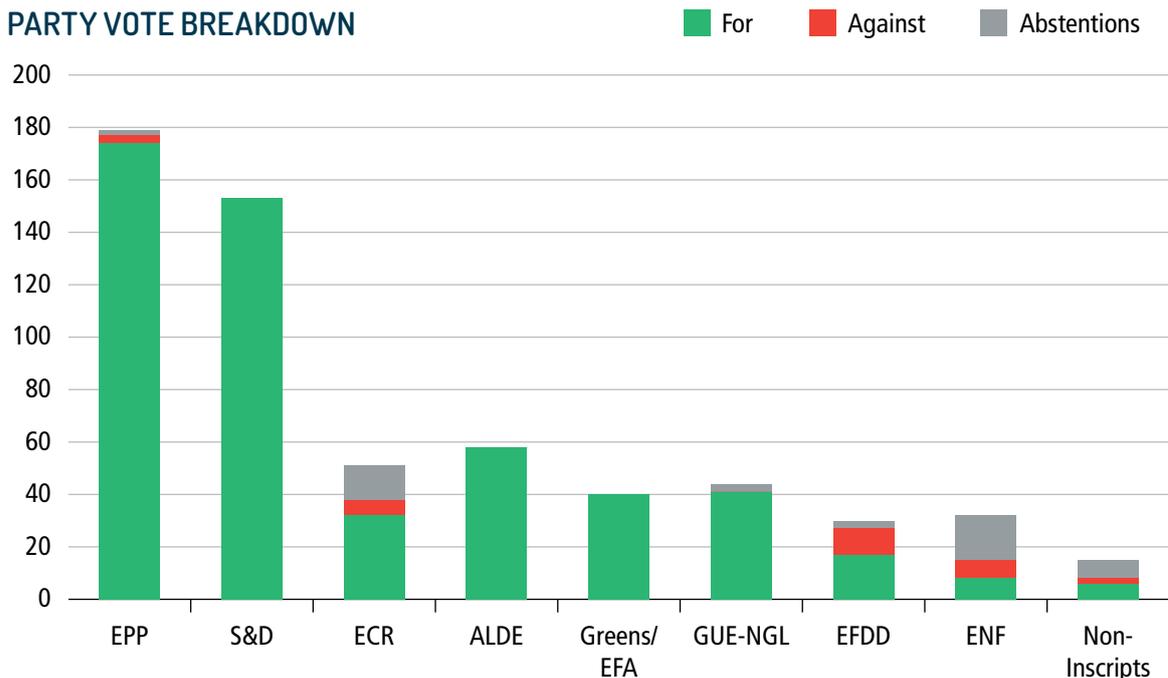
[...]

145. Strongly urges the Commission and the Member States to take additional measures to reach out to the most vulnerable, such as homeless persons with disabilities;

VOTES FOR RESOLUTION



PARTY VOTE BREAKDOWN



European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2017 on

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIRECTIVE ON COMBATING THE SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

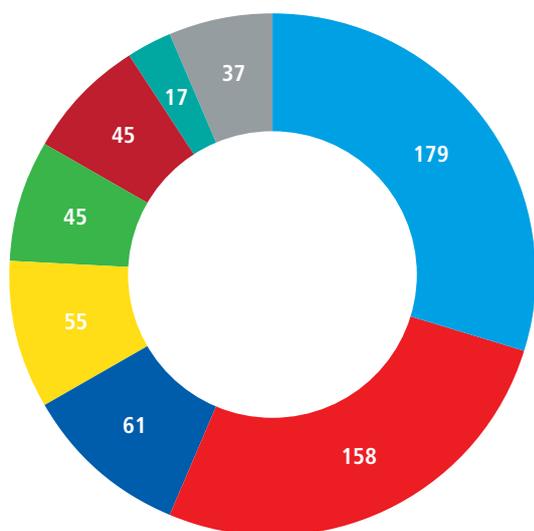


14 December 2017

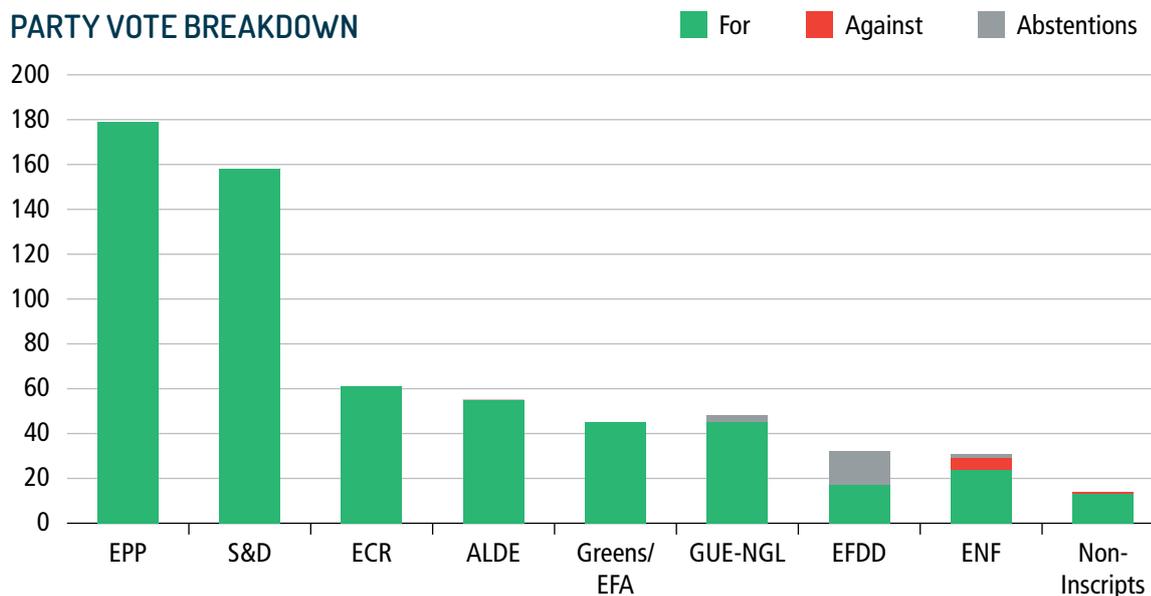
Rapporteur ► Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, EPP

24. Notes the lack of research into abuse experienced by young LGBTI people; emphasises the need for further research in this area that takes into account the sexual violence and harassment experienced by LGBTI people and the vulnerability of young homeless people, many of whom are LGBTI people who have run away from home.

VOTES FOR RESOLUTION



PARTY VOTE BREAKDOWN



European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2017 on A EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

19 January 2017

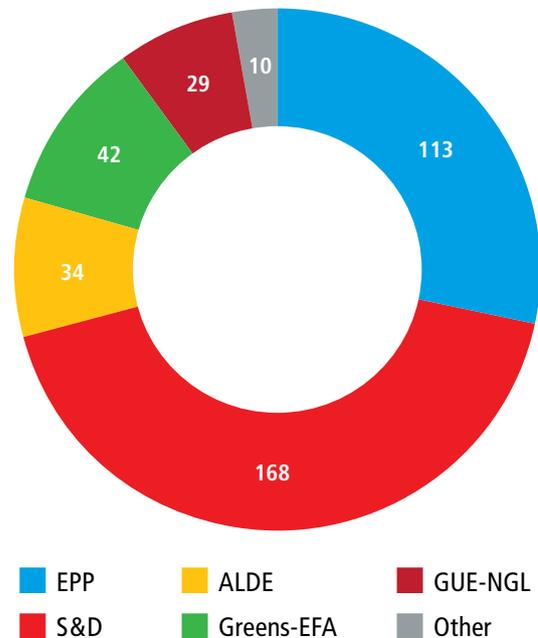


Rapporteur ► Maria João Rodrigues, S&D

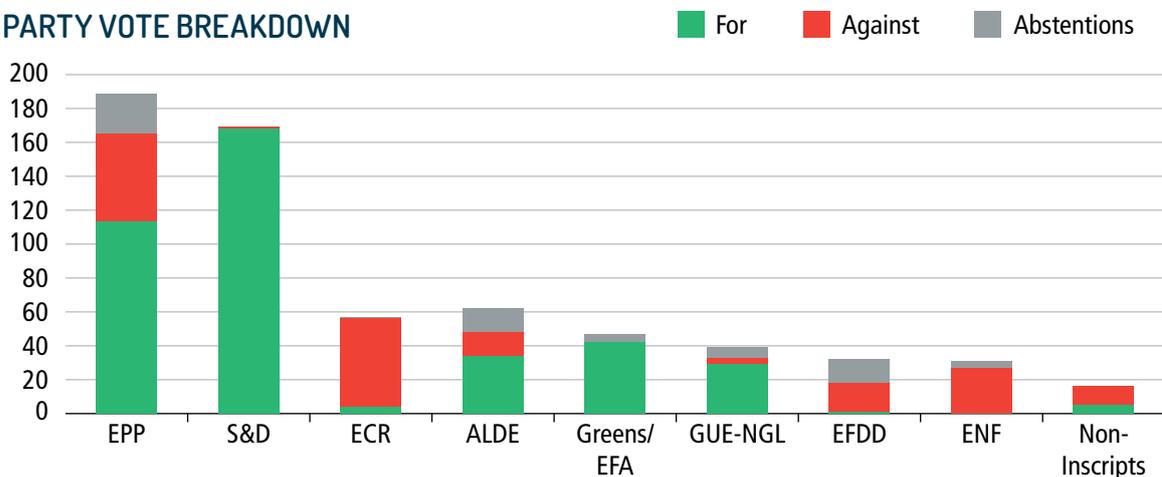
Principle 19. Calls on the Member States to deliver on the right to adequate housing by ensuring access to quality and affordable housing of adequate size for all, and to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination; urges them to enact legislation and/or other measures as needed in order to ensure that access to social housing or adequate housing benefits are provided for those in need, obviously including homeless people and families, and that vulnerable people and poor households are protected against eviction or that adequate alternative housing is provided to them; calls for provision of housing to be combined with relevant social services supporting social and economic inclusion; calls for effective measures to be taken to help young people on low incomes set up their own households; highlights investments in energy-efficient social housing as a win-win for jobs, the environment, reduction of energy poverty and realisation of social rights; calls for greater use of relevant European financial instruments to support urban renewal and affordable, accessible and energy-efficient housing provision and to promote the development of social housing in

regions where it is underdeveloped; calls for all forms of criminalisation of poverty, such as measures unfairly sanctioning homelessness or other forms of material deprivation, to be abolished;

VOTES FOR RESOLUTION



PARTY VOTE BREAKDOWN

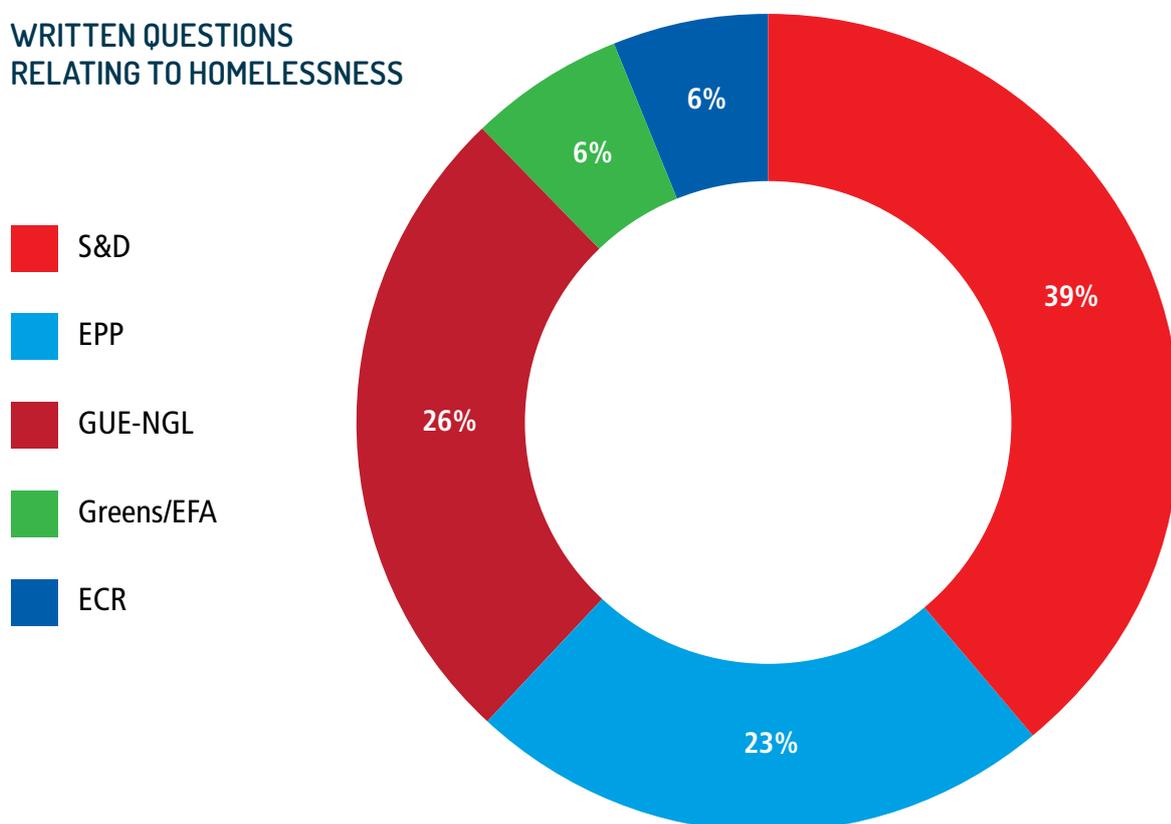


WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Throughout the 2014-2019 MEPs have been devoted to posing written questions to the various Presidents of the Parliament relating to homelessness. Throughout the term, 31 questions have been posed, stemming from nearly all the largest political groups in the hemicycle.

As the content of these questions is the sole responsibility of their author, this shows the sheer level of solidarity expressed in the European Parliament with Europe's homeless population totally independent of the political group system.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS



WRITTEN DECLARATION

Members of the European Parliament from the different mainstream political groups launched a Written Declaration in 2014 calling on the European Commission to develop an EU homelessness strategy as requested by previous European Parliaments in several Written Declarations and Resolutions. With the help of FEANTSA members, more than 300 members of the European Parliament (MEPs) signed the Declaration - just 50 short of having it formally adopted. But the wide mobilisation around the Written Declaration helped to secure support from a large group of MEPs who were willing to push the homelessness

agenda at EU level. This materialised into calls in different opinions and resolutions of the European Parliament to end the criminalisation of homeless people, to increase EU support for transnational work and learning on homelessness, and to conduct research on the issue of women's homelessness.



EVENTS



Homelessness Among Mobile EU Citizens: What Are the Reasons, What Are the Solutions?

Tuesday 16 February 2016

Hosted by Alfred Sant MEP and Sylvie Goulard MEP, the seminar explored the reasons behind why mobile EU citizens are vulnerable to homelessness, particularly with regard to precarious working conditions. It aimed to build on individuals' lived experiences as reported by homeless service providers, as well as on the analysis of whether EU law foresee minimum safety guarantees and access to services for mobile EU citizens who are economically inactive.



Launch of Be Fair, Europe – Stand up for Homeless People! Campaign

Wednesday 22 March 2017

FEANTSA launched its Be Fair, Europe – Stand up for Homeless People! Campaign on 22 March 2017 with the help of Marian Harkin MEP. The launch coincided with the release of *the Second Overview of Housing in Europe*, which showed an alarming rise in homelessness across Europe,

further highlighting the need for action to be taken. A manifesto for the campaign was been published, containing five concrete actions that can be taken by policymakers at European level to reduce homelessness.

Roundtable on Homelessness Among Migrants in Transit

Wednesday 21 June 2017

Brando Benifei MEP welcomed representatives from civil society organisations and members of the public to the European Parliament for a roundtable discussion on homelessness among

migrants in transit. The discussion encompassed new Commission asylum seeker proposals, as well as gaps in current service provision in Europe and how to fill them.

Launch of the Third Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2018

Wednesday 21 March 2018

Event celebrating the launch of the new FEANTSA/Abbé Pierre Foundation Overview of Housing Exclusion and Homelessness in Europe. The event was organised jointly by FEANTSA, the European Federation of National

Organisations working with the Homeless, Abbé Pierre Foundation, and with the support of Sylvie Guillaume, Vice-President of the European Parliament.

Roundtable on Providing Support for Undocumented Migrants

Wednesday 21 March 2018

Hosted by Jean Lambert MEP and moderated by Wayne Stanley, Focus Ireland, this event sought to evaluate how support for undocumented migrants is provided and investigate how public

authorities pressure homelessness services to identify irregularly-residing migrants or prevent them accessing service.

STANDOUT MEPs



Marian Harkin

Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe



In March 2017, Marian Harkin hosted an event in the European Parliament to launch FEANTSA's Campaign: ['Be Fair, Europe: Stand Up for Homeless People'](#) which aims to keep homelessness on the EU's agenda as it looks ahead to 2030. Marian has been a long-time supporter of the fight against homelessness and is a strong advocate of the issue back in her native Ireland.

Neena Gill

Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats



In April 2016, Neena Gill tabled a [Written Declaration](#) in the European Parliament calling for an EU homelessness strategy. Neena gathered colleagues from across party lines to co-launch the Declaration, with MEPs co-authoring from EPP, ALDE, GUE and the Greens. Whilst the Written Declaration just fell short of the 376 signatures needed with 310 gathered, it undoubtedly raised the profile of homelessness in the European Parliament.

Jean Lambert

Group of the Greens-European Free Alliance



Jean has been a long-time supporter of FEANTSA's work and in March 2018 hosted an event in the European Parliament on providing support for undocumented migrants. Jean is also on the steering group of a project led by FEANTSA called [PRODEC – Protecting the Rights of Destitute EU Mobile Citizens](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ahead of the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, FEANTSA calls on MEPs to support our campaign “Be Fair Europe: Stand Up for Homeless People”. This means working with the other EU institutions, national governments, regions, cities and stakeholders to put an end to homelessness by:

Making more effective use of existing policy instruments. The EU has called on Member States to design and implement integrated strategies to tackle homelessness. However, most countries are not delivering, and EU policy instruments are not being used to their full potential. We therefore believe that the EU should set a target of ending homelessness as part of its 2030 agenda.

Supporting homeless people in all relevant sectoral areas. Many solutions lie in areas beyond specific “homelessness policies.” Unfortunately, these other policies are often blind to homelessness. Responses to homelessness should therefore be mainstreamed into the design and implementation of relevant EU sectoral policies including youth, gender, migration, disability, mobility, cohesion and urban development.

Monitoring homelessness and benchmarking progress at Member State level. The EU plays a key role in monitoring and benchmarking socio-economic indicators across Member States. However, the EU statistical toolkit does not cover homelessness data, making it difficult to track and compare progress. Homelessness should therefore be an integral element of social analysis carried out by the European Commission.

FOR FUTURE



Defending the rights of homeless people. Homeless people have the same basic human rights as everyone else. However, these rights are frequently violated - and worse still, criminalised in different Member States. Therefore, the EU can and should act to enforce fundamental rights, social rights and the rights of all EU citizens.

Investing EU funds in ending homelessness. Homelessness has significant human, societal and economic costs. Tackling it is a good investment for the future. However, current resources at EU and national level are not enough to deliver lasting solutions. Therefore, EU instruments like the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investment should be used to help Member States deliver smart, sustainable solutions.

**BE FAIR, EUROPE
STAND UP FOR
HOMELESS PEOPLE**

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15 October 2014

[Report on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation of 2014 priorities](#)

Rapporteur: Philippe De Backer, ALDE

5 March 2015

[Report on European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2015](#)

Rapporteur: Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, S&D

26 June 2015

[Report on the urban dimension of EU policies](#)

Rapporteur: Kerstin Westphal, S&D

16 July 2015

[Report on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union \(2013-2014\)](#)

Rapporteur: Laura Ferrara, EFDD

23 October 2015

[Report on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty](#)

Rapporteur: Inês Cristina Zuber, Gue/NGL

30 October 2015

[Report on cohesion policy and marginalised communities](#)

Rapporteur: Terry Reintke, Greens-EFA

22 February 2016

[Report on European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2016](#)

Rapporteur: Sofia Ribeiro, EPP

25 February 2016

[Report on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs](#)

Rapporteur: Tamás Meszerics, Greens-EFA

26 April 2016

[Report on poverty: a gender perspective](#)

Rapporteur: Maria Arena, S&D

24 November 2016

[Report on the fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015](#)

Rapporteur: József Nagy, EPP

20 December 2016

[Report on a European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

Rapporteur: Maria João Rodrigues, S&D

10 February 2017

[Report on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2017](#)

Rapporteur: Yana Toom, ALDE

6 October 2017

[Report on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty](#)

Rapporteur: Laura Agea, EFDD

25 October 2017

[Report on Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism](#)

Rapporteur: Soraya Post, S&D

30 October 2017

[Report on implementation of the European Disability Strategy](#)

Rapporteur: Helga Stevens, ECR

31 October 2017

[Report on combating inequalities as a lever to boost job creation and growth](#)

Rapporteur: Javi López, S&D

30 December 2017

[Report on Implementation of the directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#)

Rapporteur: Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, EPP

5 March 2018

[Report on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: employment and social aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2018 \(2017/2260\(INI\)\)](#)

Rapporteur: Krzysztof Hetman, EPP

9 April 2018

[Report on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States](#)

Rapporteur: Miroslavs Mitrofanovs, Greens-EFA

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29 September 2014

[EU homelessness strategy](#)

Patrick Le Hyaric, GUE/NGL

15 October 2014

[Progress in creating an EU strategy for homelessness](#)

Olga Sehnalová, S&D

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Theodoros Zagorakis, EPP

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[Food waste in Europe](#)

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14 January 2015

[Methods of cooperation and coordination between Directorates General to safeguard migrants' fundamental rights](#)

Antonio López-Istúriz White, EPP

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Liadh Ní Riada, GUE/NGL

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[Housing crisis in Ireland](#)

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Kostas Chrysogonos, GUE/NGL

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10 April 2015

[Potential discrimination against migrants and homeless persons in the implementation of the European Social Fund](#)

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22 May 2015

[Specific measures to fight homelessness](#)

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[Affordable housing as a key condition for macro-economic and social progress](#)

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29 September 2015

[Homelessness and free movement](#)

Alfred Sant, S&D

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[Housing crisis in Ireland](#)

Lynn Boylan, GUE/NGL

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[Violence against women and homelessness](#)

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[Housing supply in the EU](#)

Mairead McGuinness, EPP

22 December 2015

[Follow-up to Written Question on homelessness and free movement](#)

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13 January 2016

[Europe-wide problem of homelessness](#)

Maria Grapini, S&D

03 February 2016

[Solving the problem of homeless people living on the streets](#)

Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, EPP

16 February 2016

[Homelessness](#)

Deirdre Clune, EPP

23 March 2016

[EU action on homelessness](#)

Brian Hayes, EPP

17 June 2016

[Rent certainty](#)

Liadh Ní Riada, GUE/NGL

29 August 2016

[Specific actions to prevent and reduce youth homelessness](#)

Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, S&D

19 December 2016

[Homelessness crisis](#)

Liadh Ní Riada, GUE/NGL

28 March 2017

[New information on homelessness](#)

Neoklis Sylikiotis, GUE/NGL

07 June 2017

[Increasing levels of homelessness in Europe](#)

Charles Tannock, ECR

19 June 2017

[Initiatives to assist homeless people](#)

Jana Žitánská, ECR

07 December 2017

[Rough sleeping and homelessness](#)

Rory Palmer, S&D

23 May 2018

[Veterans and Homelessness](#)

Rory Palmer, S&D

30 May 2018

[Homelessness, housing and poverty in the EU Youth Strategy](#)

Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, S&D

01 June 2018

[Rising numbers of homeless in EU countries](#)

Dubravka Šuic, EPP

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European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless

194 Chaussée de Louvain, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

T +32 (0)2 538 66 69 • information@feantsa.org