Resolution on an EU homelessness strategy

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Following the debate held in plenary on 13 September 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on an EU Homelessness Strategy, and urges Member States to make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015. Members note that EU-level policy coordination in the area of homelessness in the framework of the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion has enhanced and added value to efforts at national, regional and local level over the past decade, and there is a need to build on this work in the framework of a more strategic approach. They call for the **development of an ambitious, integrated EU strategy**, underpinned by national and regional strategies with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework. The Commission is asked to establish a working group for an EU homelessness strategy and to involve all stakeholders in the fight against homelessness, including national, regional and local policy-makers, researchers, NGO homeless service providers, people experiencing homelessness and neighbouring sectors such as housing, employment and health. The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) should be taken into consideration in developing the EU strategy.

Parliament calls for a **framework, agreed by the Commission and Member States, for monitoring the development of national and regional homelessness strategies,** as a central element of the EU homelessness strategy. The following key elements of homelessness strategies (put forward by the 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion) should be monitored:

- clear targets, particularly relating to the prevention of homelessness; a reduction in its duration; a reduction in the most severe forms of homelessness; the improvement of the quality of services for homeless people and access to affordable housing;
- an integrated approach covering all relevant policy fields;
- proper governance;
- proper data collection;
- a strong housing dimension;
- taking account of changing profiles of the homeless population, and particularly the impact of migration.

This monitoring framework should address the progress of the Member States towards ending street homelessness and ending long-term homelessness.

However, an EU homelessness strategy should go beyond monitoring and reporting and deliver a package of activities to support the development and of effective national and regional homelessness strategies. Parliament calls for:

- a strong research agenda in order to develop knowledge and understanding in the framework of an EU homelessness strategy, and ongoing mutual learning and transnational exchange on key issues in the fight against homelessness;
- a specific focus on ‘housing-led’ approaches under the social innovation strand of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion in order to strengthen the evidence base on effective combinations of housing and floating support for formerly homeless people and inform evidence-based practice and policy development;

- the development of strong links between the EU homelessness strategy and EU funding streams – especially from the Structural Funds, and the Commission is asked to promote the use of the ERDF financing facility also for housing for marginalised groups to address homelessness in the different EU Member States.

Lastly, Parliament urges the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to work more on the implications of extreme poverty and social exclusion in terms of access to and enjoyment of fundamental rights, bearing in mind that the fulfilment of the right to housing is critical for the enjoyment of a full range of other rights, including political and social rights.