Basic information

2019/2187(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Access to decent and affordable housing for all **Subject** 4.10.12 Housing policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	VAN SPARRENTAK Kim (Greens/EFA)	17/02/2020
	Shadow rapporteur MANDL Lukas (EPP) DURÁ FERRANDIS Estrella (S&D) TOOM Jana (Renew) SZYDŁO Beata (ECR) REIL Guido (ID) CHAIBI Leila (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
01/12/2020	Vote in committee		
08/12/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0247/2020	Summary
20/01/2021	Debate in Parliament		

21/01/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0020/2021	Summary
21/01/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/01/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2019/2187(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/9/01675

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE653.984	23/07/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE655.956	09/09/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0247/2020	08/12/2020	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0020/2021	21/01/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)223	09/07/2021	

Access to decent and affordable housing for all

2019/2187(INI) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 352 votes to 179, with 152 abstentions, a resolution on access to decent and affordable housing for all.

The EU and its Member States have an obligation to ensure access to decent and affordable housing for all, in accordance with the fundamental rights set out in the European Social Charter and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Eurofound estimates that inadequate housing costs EU economies EUR 195 billion a year. EU rents and property prices have risen over the past decade. Almost 38% of households at risk of poverty spend more than 40% of their disposable income on housing.

Moreover, homelessness is rising in at least 24 Member States. On any given night in the European Union 700 000 homeless people have to sleep in shelters or on the street, which is an increase of 70 % in the past 10 years. The COVID-19 crisis has aggravated housing insecurity, over-indebtedness, and the risk of eviction and homelessness.

Achieving adequate, energy-efficient and healthy housing

Parliament called for the right to adequate housing to be recognised and enforced as a fundamental human right through relevant European and national legislation. It called on the Commission and Member States to ensure equal access to decent housing for all, including clean and high-quality

drinking water, adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene, connection to water and sanitation networks, a quality indoor environment and affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for all.

Members called for EU-wide action for a winter heating disconnection moratorium and a winter truce to be introduced.

The resolution recommended that priority be given to reducing emissions and energy efficiency through housing renovation. It supported the emphasis of the "renovation wave" on tackling energy poverty and the worst performing buildings, in line with the objectives European Green Deal.

Tackling homelessness and discrimination

Members recalled the EU's objective to end homelessness by 2030 and called on the Commission to propose an EU framework for national homeless strategies based on the principle of "Housing First".

Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- adopt a common framework definition and coherent indicators on homelessness in the EU;

- take measures for young people who reach the age of 18 and are at risk of homelessness;

- end the criminalisation of homeless people and combat discrimination on the grounds of homelessness;

- prepare a gender-sensitive approach to support homeless women, who have often already faced complex traumas and are experiencing new ones, such as domestic violence.

An integrated approach to social, public and affordable housing at EU level

Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to make housing one of the cornerstones of the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights and to improve its action to engage all levels of government in the full and systematic implementation of the right to decent housing for all. It welcomed the inclusion of accessibility to affordable housing in the European Semester.

Recalling that 25.1 % of European tenants paying market price rents spend over 40 % of their income on rent, the committee called on Member States and regional and local authorities to put in place legal provisions, including clear rental regulations, to protect the rights of tenants and owner-occupiers.

It requested that the current reference threshold for the housing cost overburden rate, i.e. 40% of a household's disposable income, be re-evaluated.

Members noted with concern the increased financialisation of the housing market, in particular in cities, whereby investors treat housing as a tradable asset rather than a human right. In this regard, they called on the Commission to put forward legislative proposals to counter financialisation of the housing market by mid-2021.

Investing in social, public, affordable and energy-efficient housing

Stressing that the investment gap in affordable housing amounts to EUR 57 billion per year, Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to further increase investment in the EU in social, public, energy-efficient, adequate and affordable housing, and in tackling homelessness and housing exclusion. It called for investment through the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, ESF+, Horizon Europe and Next Generation EU, and especially through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+).

Access to decent and affordable housing for all

2019/2187(INI) - 08/12/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Kim VAN SPARRENTAK (Greens/EFA, NL) on access to decent and affordable housing for all.

Access to adequate housing is a fundamental right must be seen as a precondition for the exercise of, and access to, other fundamental rights and for a life in conditions of human dignity. Despite this, homelessness is rising in at least 24 Member States. On any given night in the European Union 700 000 homeless people have to sleep in shelters or on the street, which is an increase of 70 % in the past 10 years. The COVID-19 crisis has aggravated housing insecurity, over-indebtedness, and the risk of eviction and homelessness.

Achieving adequate, energy-efficient and healthy housing

The report supports the Renovation Wave’s focus on tackling energy-poverty and worst performing buildings, in line with the objectives and principles of the European Green Deal. The Renovation Wave should be prioritised in the multiannual financial framework and Next Generation EU.

In addition, Members called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- ensure equal access for all to decent housing, including clean and high-quality drinking water, adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene;

- prioritise emissions reductions and energy efficiency through housing renovation;

- support the circular economy in the construction sector;

Combating homelessness and fighting discrimination

Members recalled the EU's goal to end homelessness by 2030 and called on the Commission to propose an EU framework for National Homelessness Strategies. According to Members, the provision of permanent housing to homeless people should be prioritised. Financial support should be provided for young people and people with disabilities to promote independent living and to women and children who are particularly exposed to the housing crisis.

The committee called on Member States to prohibit and tackle discrimination on the grounds of homelessness or other housing status, and to repeal all laws and measures that criminalise or penalise people for being homeless or behaviours associated with being homeless, such as sleeping or eating in public spaces. Exceptional measures are needed to protect homeless people during the COVID-19 crisis.

An integrated approach to social, public and affordable housing at EU level

The report called on the Commission and the Member States to make housing one of the cornerstones of the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Commission should urgently develop an integrated EU-level strategy for social, public, non-segregated and affordable housing, creating an enabling framework for national, regional and local authorities to ensure the provision of safe, healthy, accessible and affordable quality housing for all.

Member States are encouraged to collaborate on financing social investments aimed at solving housing problems with the social partners, civil society and the private sector, many of whom play and can play a key role in the development and maintenance of adequate housing solutions for those in vulnerable situations.

Recalling that 25.1 % of European tenants paying market price rents spend over 40 % of their income on rent, the committee called on Member States and regional and local authorities to put in place legal provisions, including clear rental regulations, to protect the rights of tenants and owner-occupiers.

Members noted with concern the increased financialisation of the housing market, in particular in cities, whereby investors treat housing as a tradable asset rather than a human right. In this regard, they called on the Commission to put forward legislative proposals to counter financialisation of the housing market by mid-2021.

Investing in social, public, affordable and energy-efficient housing

The report called on the Commission and the Member States to further increase investment in the EU in social, public, energy-efficient, adequate and affordable housing, and in tackling homelessness and housing exclusion. They called for investment through the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, ESF+, Horizon Europe and Next Generation EU, and especially through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+).