



Homelessness



FEANTSA

Posted by: FEANTSA



Manifesto to end homelessness

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 EU committed to lifting 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. By 2014, homelessness was rapidly increasing across the continent. Following the European Parliamentary 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.

The current mandate has seen a wide range of positive action by the

European Parliament in tackling homelessness.

Key Developments

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 is the European Year of focus on violence against women. This has helped put women's homelessness, which is often related to violence, in the spotlight in a range of EP resolutions.

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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** 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** 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."

European Pillar of Social Rights

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a new framework for social policy coordination in the EU. The EP for EU Member States to “prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination” as well as calling for “all forms of criminalisation of poverty, such as measures unfairly sanctioning homelessness or other forms of material deprivation, to be abolished.”

Homelessness strategy

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In this parliamentary term, MEPs have asked approximately 40 questions on the issue of homelessness. They have organised a wide range of events and initiatives to support the fight against homelessness.

Towards 2019

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”. Therefore, 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:

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- **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.
- **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

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.
