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*Plenary sitting*

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6.9.2011

B7-0475/2011

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0421/2011

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on an EU Homelessness Strategy

**Pervenche Berès, Karima Delli**

on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

**B7-0475/2011**

**European Parliament resolution on an EU Homelessness Strategy**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its written declarations of 22 April 2008 on ending street homelessness and of 16 December 2010 on an EU homelessness strategy<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, especially its Article 34,
  - having regard to the revised European Social Charter of the Council of Europe, especially its Article 31,
  - having regard to the 2010 Joint Report of the Commission and the Council on Social Protection and Social Inclusion,
  - having regard to the Council Declaration of 6 December 2010 on The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: Working together to fight poverty in 2010 and beyond,
  - having regard to the final recommendations of the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness of 9 and 10 December 2010,
  - having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 16 December 2010 on The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion (COM(2010)0758),
  - having regard to the Opinions of the Committee of the Regions of 3 June 1999 on Housing and the homeless (CdR 376/98 fin), of 6 October 2010 on Combating homelessness (CdR 18/2010 fin) and of 31 March 2011 on The European platform against poverty and social exclusion (CdR 402/2010 fin),
  - having regard to the question of 11 July 2011 to the Commission on an EU homelessness strategy (O-000153/2011 – B7-0475/2011),
  - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas homelessness continues to affect people in all EU Member States and is an unacceptable violation of human dignity;
- B. whereas homelessness represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation, and has increased in recent years in several EU Member States;
- C. whereas 2010 was the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion;

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<sup>1</sup> P6\_TA(2008)0163 and P7\_TA(2010)0499.

- D. whereas homelessness has emerged as a clear priority within the EU's social inclusion process;
- E. whereas 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 whereas there is a need to build on this work in the framework of a more strategic approach;
- F. whereas the very nature of homelessness is multifaceted and requires a multifaceted policy response;
- G. whereas the Europe 2020 Strategy, and its headline target of lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020, provides new impetus in the fight against all forms of poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness;
- H. whereas a key element of the Europe 2020 Strategy is the flagship initiative the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion;
- I. whereas this framework paves the way for enhanced and more ambitious action on homelessness at EU level by identifying methods and means to best continue the work the Commission has started on homelessness, taking into account the outcome of the consensus conference of December 2010;
- J. whereas the Committee of the Regions outlined a European Social Housing Agenda aiming at the coordination of measures in relation to the financing of social housing, to the use of Structural Funds and to improved energy efficiency; whereas the EU Homelessness Strategy should contribute to this agenda;
1. Urges Member States to make progress towards the goal of ending street homelessness by 2015;
  2. Calls 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;
  3. Calls on the Commission 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;
  4. Calls for the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) to be taken into consideration in developing an EU strategy; calls on the Social Protection Committee and its indicators sub-group to promote agreement amongst Member States on applying this definition; calls on EUROSTAT to collect EU homelessness data in the framework of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC);

5. Calls for a framework, agreed by the Commission and the Member States for monitoring the development of national and regional homelessness strategies, as a central element of the EU homelessness strategy; calls in this context for an annual or bi-annual reporting strategy to report on progress;
6. Considers that the following key elements of homelessness strategies (put forward by the 2010 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion) should be monitored and reported upon:
  - 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;
7. Calls specifically for this monitoring framework to address the progress of the Member States towards ending street homelessness and ending long-term homelessness;
8. Calls for an EU homelessness strategy to go beyond monitoring and reporting and deliver a package of activities to support the development and sustainment of effective national and regional homelessness strategies;
9. 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;
10. Calls for 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;
11. Calls for an EU homelessness strategy to focus on the promotion of quality services for homeless people and urges the Commission to develop a voluntary quality framework as stipulated in the Communication on the European Poverty Platform;
12. Calls for the development of strong links between the EU homelessness strategy and EU funding streams – especially from the Structural Funds; calls upon the Commission to promote the use of the ERDF financing facility also for housing for marginalised groups to address homelessness in the different EU Member States;
13. Calls for homelessness to be mainstreamed across relevant policy domains as an aspect of

the fight against poverty and social exclusion;

14. Considers that an EU Homelessness Strategy should fully respect the Lisbon Treaty, which stipulates ‘the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities in providing, commissioning and organising services of general economic interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users’; considers that it is up to the Member States to define the remits of affordable and social housing and that an EU Homelessness Strategy should be fully compliant with the social housing policy of Member States, which legally enshrines the principle of promoting the social mix and fighting social segregation;
15. 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;
16. Urges the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council to discuss how to develop an EU homelessness strategy;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Social Protection Committee and the Council of Europe.