



2020/2802(RSP)

10.11.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 227(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on tackling homelessness rates in the EU
(2020/2802(RSP))

Dolors Montserrat
on behalf of the Committee on Petitions

**European Parliament resolution on tackling homelessness rates in the EU
(2020/2802(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union, and Articles 4, 9 and 151 thereof of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations adopted by world leaders in September 2015 and endorsed by the Council, in particular the SDGs 1, 3, 8 and 11,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 21, 26 and 34 (3) on non-discrimination, integration of persons with disabilities and Union's recognition and respect the right to social and housing assistance,
- having regard to the European Social Charter signed at Turin on 18 October 1961,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social rights, in particular its Article 19 on Housing and assistance for the homeless,
- having regard to the 1989 Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers,
- having regard to EU country-specific recommendations of 25 May 2018 on housing in all 28 Member States
- having regard to the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and its aim to 'ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all',
- having regard to European Parliament legislative resolution of 10 July 2020 on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States,
- having regard to European Parliament resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences,
- having regard to European Parliament resolution of 10 October 2019 on employment and social policies of the euro area,
- having regard to European Parliament legislative resolution of 4 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+),
- having regard to Rule 227(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the Committee on Petitions has received petition 0546/2020 and several other petitions raising concerns over the situation of more than 4 million homeless European citizens and the number of homelessness people in the EU has allegedly increased over 70% in the last 10 years;
- B. whereas homelessness is directly related to the difficulty of exercising other basic rights, such as access to health and that homeless people are frequently the target of hate crimes and violence, including social stigmatization;
- C. whereas these petitions call for a European Union that leaves no one behind and adopts an urgent concerted action to take preventative measures that can reduce the risk and magnitude of homelessness in a sustainable manner;
- D. whereas, in the hierarchy of human needs, housing provides space for life, thereby allowing other basic and higher needs to be fulfilled;
- E. whereas the European Union shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child;
- F. whereas in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, social housing policies and a high level of education, training and protection of human health;
- G. whereas the absence of a single widely adopted definition of homelessness and housing exclusion in the EU makes it difficult to assess the extent of homelessness across the EU countries;
- H. whereas that rates of homelessness have increased over the last decade in a number of EU countries; whereas the causes of such an increase are a combination of rising housing costs, the impact of the economic crisis, the reduction of social protection and the inadequacy of policies to address homelessness in many Member States; whereas house prices rose by 5% in the euro area (EA19) and by 5.2% in the EU27 in the second quarter of 2020 compared with the same quarter of the previous year;
- I. whereas the EU has no direct competence over housing policy, but it can affect housing conditions in the Member States indirectly through regulations, such as state aid rules, fiscal law and competition law and measures such as recommendations and guidelines;
- J. whereas the European Social Fund is established in order to improve employment opportunities for workers in the internal market and to contribute thereby to raising the standard of living and helps homeless people to move into social housing;
- K. whereas other European structural and investment funds such as ERDF have been used on housing projects and addressing deprived communities' needs;
- L. whereas the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived supports EU countries' actions to provide food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived;

- M. whereas homelessness has been increasingly mentioned in the last European Semester reports;
- N. whereas social costs of not tackling homelessness are especially high in the justice and health domains;
- O. whereas welfare policies, based on broad universal provisions coupled with properly targeted measures, have a very important role when it comes to preventing homelessness
- P. whereas evidence collected of the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the affordability of housing in the EU indicates that in the medium term, economic recession and the loss of jobs and income may further increase the housing cost overburden and homelessness rates in Europe;
- Q. whereas the profile of the homeless population has been changing and now includes more young people and children, the elderly, migrants, Roma and other disadvantaged minorities, women and families are increasingly at-risk of homelessness;
- R. whereas having access to decent housing and being part of society is crucial for allowing people to realise their full potential and to contribute to society;
- S. whereas homelessness is generally triggered by a complex interplay of structural, institutional and personal factors
- T. whereas homelessness and housing exclusion are a social problem that should be permanently solved;
- U. whereas certain Member States criminalise homelessness and behaviour associated with homelessness;
- V. whereas in certain Member States homeless persons only have constant access to shelter during wintertime and not continuously throughout the year;
- W. whereas in certain Member States local social security services only have a passive role in assisting homeless persons in reintegration into society;
1. Expresses its deepest concern on the situation of more than 4 million homeless European citizens as the ongoing health and economic crisis puts more people out of a job and makes more people dependent on social protection;
 2. Recalls that access to housing is a fundamental human right of all people and calls on the EU and the Member States to end homelessness in the Union by 2030 and setting this as a goal at EU level; calls on the Commission to take stronger action to support Member States in reducing and eradicating homelessness as a priority in the context of the action plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, and according to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
 3. Stresses that homelessness is identified as one of the most severe forms of poverty and deprivation that needs to be abolished by targeted and integrated policies, and in a

sustainable manner through addressing personal (such as individual vulnerabilities) and structural risk factors (housing, unemployment...);

4. Calls on the European Commission and the Member States to adopt a shared framework definition and coherent indicators on homelessness in the EU, which would enable common understanding, systematic comparison and assessment of the extent of homelessness across different EU countries;
5. Recalls that during the COVID-19 crisis the European Parliament provided shelter to 100 homeless women on the EP premises;
6. Points out the importance of strengthening data collection mechanisms, as homelessness rates should then be systematically monitored at EU level via institutions such as Eurostat;
7. Welcomes what the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion has done to support and address this situation as one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
8. Calls on the Commission to propose an EU Framework for National Homelessness Strategies and further calls on the Member States to adopt the principle of Housing First, based on some Member States good practices, helps to substantially reduce the rate of homelessness by introducing determined action plans and innovative approaches; states that such innovative approaches are based on the concept of home as a fundamental human right and develop then broader socio-working integration paths;
9. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to continue targeting the reduction of homelessness through mainstreaming into it the relevant EU sectorial policies, especially but not exclusively in the regional development, health, human rights, youth, gender, migration and integration domains;
10. Calls on the Member States to assume their primary responsibility for tackling homelessness, to work on prevention and early intervention which are, in many ways, the most cost-effective and harm-minimising policies for confronting homelessness and to assign a more proactive role to regional and local social security services to assist homeless people with reintegration into society;
11. Emphasizes the need for inter-ministerial, intergovernmental collaboration in the development and implementation of such strategies as well as the participation of key stakeholders and encourages the exchange of the best practices among the Member States;
12. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to improve the collection of relevant and comparable data with the involvement of accredited non-governmental organisations and local authorities working in the field of poverty and social exclusion and in the provision of services for persons at risk or experiencing homelessness;
13. Supports the tasks of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) where Member States together with the European Commission work on homelessness related issues through the Open Method of Coordination;

14. Requests the Commission to improve monitoring and governance and to continue mobilising of funding and EU policies relating to homelessness; calls on the Commission to ensure that regions and local authorities make use of ERDF resources for social housing;
15. Calls on the Member States to provide equal access to public services such as health care, education and social services;
16. Calls on the Member States to support the integration of the homeless people into the labour market, via the provision of specialised and individualised support and reconciliation measures, integrated employment programmes and trainings as well as other tailored and targeted schemes to facilitate their reintegration in the labour market; calls on Commission and the Member States to ensure the revised Youth Guarantee contributes to tackling youth homelessness;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to duly implement the European Pillar of Social Rights that reflects contributions received throughout the consultation period on principle 19 including "Housing and assistance for the homeless" in its 2021 Action Plan and insists in making a better use of the European Semester in order to ensure progress in tackling homelessness rates and housing exclusion;
18. Highlights that homeless people and other people in precarious housing situations are at particular risk due to the COVID-19 crisis; insists in urging the EU and Member States to implement targeted measures to protect the homeless and to provide financial assistance to accredited NGOs and public-private partnerships and to support the local authorities in securing safe spaces and preventing evictions;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use the existing instruments, as well as instruments under the MFF 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, for improving employment opportunities and social integration to jobless households;
20. Calls on the Member States to urgently tackle the issue of homelessness by adopting long-term, community based, housing led, integrated national homelessness strategies as encouraged by the EU's social investment package;
21. Calls on the Council to regularly report on the results achieved in this field;
22. Calls on the Member States to foster social participation of all the stakeholders in integrated homelessness strategies, as well as to promote social entrepreneurship and self-innovation activities to improve active inclusion of homeless people;
23. Calls on the Member States to decriminalise homelessness;
24. Calls on the Member States to provide constant and continuous access to emergency shelters throughout; stresses, however, that this should only ever be temporary and is not an alternative to structural solutions such as prevention and the provision of adequate housing and social support to respond to homelessness;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European Commission and to the governments and the parliaments of the Member States.

