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B7-0009/2014

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on an EU homelessness strategy  
(2013/2994(RSP))

**Niccolò Rinaldi, Marielle de Sarnez**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**B7-0009/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on an EU homelessness strategy  
(2013/2994(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Articles 2 and 3 thereof,
  - having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular Article 9 thereof,
  - having regard to the revised European Social Charter of the Council of Europe, in particular Article 31 thereof,
  - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 34 thereof,
  - having regard to its declaration of 22 April 2008 on ending street homelessness<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2011 on an EU Homelessness Strategy<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas homelessness has become a clear priority of the EU's poverty policy, in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU Social Investment Package;
- B. whereas homelessness continues to affect people in all Member States and is an unacceptable violation of human dignity and human rights;
- C. whereas homelessness represents the most extreme form of poverty and deprivation, and has increased in recent years in virtually all Member States;
- D. whereas the Member States worst hit by the economic and financial crisis are witnessing an unprecedented increase in homelessness;
- E. whereas on 14 September 2011 Parliament adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution calling for an integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies, with the long-term aim of ending homelessness;
- F. whereas six principles were agreed at the Ministers' Round Table on Homelessness, held in Leuven on 1 March 2013 on the initiative of the Irish Presidency;
- G. whereas several EU bodies such as the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and Parliament have called on the Commission to develop an EU

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 259 E, 29.10.2009, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 101.

strategy on homelessness or something similar;

- H. 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 and the Europe 2020 strategy, has added value to efforts at national, regional and local level over the past decade, and whereas there is a need and a demand to further develop this work with a more strategic and longer-term approach;
- I. whereas homelessness is by its very nature a multifaceted problem and requires a multifaceted policy response;
- J. whereas there is increasing evidence that housing-led approaches to homelessness are the most effective;
- K. 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, which should also aim at reducing homelessness, requires renewed efforts from the Member States and the EU;
- L. whereas a key element of the Europe 2020 strategy is the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion flagship initiative, which includes several actions related to homelessness that have not yet been implemented;
- M. whereas homelessness receives increasing focus in the framework of the EU Semester, with several Member States including homelessness as an anti-poverty priority in their 2012 and 2013 National Reform Programmes;
- N. whereas the current EU policy framework and the social reality on the ground are paving the way for enhanced and more ambitious action on homelessness at EU level;
- O. whereas the European consensus conference of December 2010 provides a solid basis for more ambitious EU action on homelessness;
- P. whereas the immediate responsibility for tackling homelessness lies with the Member States, and in particular regional and local authorities, and whereas an EU strategy has an complementary role to play;
- Q. whereas a stronger role for the Commission is possible within its current areas of competence and while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
- R. whereas DG Employment is best placed to lead on homelessness, but several other DGs should also address homelessness within their areas of responsibility;
- S. whereas an increasing number of Member States have a holistic homelessness strategy and could benefit from European cooperation to further develop their policies;
- T. whereas in some Member States public authorities have taken measures to penalise or criminalise homelessness, which do not respect the fundamental rights of homeless people;
- U. whereas the criminalisation of homelessness does not belong in a democratic modern

society and creates double penalisation of already socially excluded and poor persons;

1. Urges the Commission to develop an EU homelessness strategy without any further delay along the lines set out in Parliament's resolution of 14 September 2011 on an EU homelessness strategy and in proposals from other EU institutions and bodies;
2. Considers that an EU homelessness strategy should fully respect the Lisbon Treaty, which affirms '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 responsibility for fighting homelessness lies with the Member States and that an EU homelessness strategy should therefore support Member States in taking up this responsibility as effectively as possible while fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
3. Calls on the Commission to establish a high-level expert group to support it in the preparation and further development of an EU homelessness strategy;
4. Calls on the Commission to give due consideration to references to homelessness in the Country Specific Recommendations for Member States where progress on homelessness is urgently required; calls on the Member States to further strengthen the inclusion of homelessness in their National Reform Programmes;
5. Invites the Commission to use the EaSI (employment and social innovation) programme as the main source of funding for an EU strategy to finance research and transnational exchanges, and to further build its cooperation with key European partners such as FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless) and HABITACT (European exchange forum on local homelessness strategies);
6. Calls on the Commission to mainstream homelessness across all relevant EU policy areas; and encourages the Commission to involve different Directorates-General in the development and implementation of an EU homelessness strategy under the leadership of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion;
7. Invites the Commission to focus on the following as priority themes for an EU homelessness strategy:
  - housing-led / Housing First approaches to homelessness;
  - link between free movement and homelessness;
  - quality of homelessness services;
  - prevention of homelessness;
  - youth homelessness;
8. Invites the Commission and Council to consider introducing a guarantee to ensure that nobody in the EU is forced to sleep rough because of a lack of (emergency) services adapted to his or her needs; considers that such a guarantee could be modelled on the Youth Guarantee, which is based on a Council recommendation, and could use the same

governance structure;

9. Recalls its resolution of 14 September 2011 on homelessness for the key elements of an EU homelessness strategy, and wishes to stress the following elements in particular:
  - regular European monitoring of Member States' progress on homelessness;
  - an EU indicator on homelessness;
  - research and knowledge building on homelessness policies and services, including cost-effectiveness studies;
  - social innovation in homeless policies and services, including testing and scaling up;
  - link with EU funds, in particular the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived;
10. Calls on the Member States and the EU Presidency to hold on a regular basis a European Round Table of EU Ministers responsible for homelessness, as initiated by the Irish EU Presidency in March 2013; invites the Commission to provide practical and financial support for this meeting;
11. Calls on the Member States to develop comprehensive homelessness strategies which are housing-led and include a strong prevention focus and which take into account the guidance provided in the Commission communication entitled 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion' and the Commission staff working document entitled 'Confronting Homelessness in Europe';
12. Urges the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to do more work on the implications of extreme poverty for 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 several political and social rights; proposes that the FRA should focus on the criminalisation of homelessness as being a human rights violation;
13. 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.