European Federation of National Organisations Working With the Homeless

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For Immediate Release

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European Parliament Calls upon the EU for concrete action towards ending homelessness

On the 16th December 2010, the European Parliament adopted a cross-party Written Declaration calling for an ambitious EU homelessness strategy and support to Member States in their efforts towards ending homelessness.

The adoption of the Written Declaration is very timely and coincides with the closing of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The European Parliament, as the only directly elected body of the European Union, sends out a strong political message that homelessness is an urgent issue affecting a growing share of individuals and families across Europe and an unacceptable violation of fundamental human rights. It calls upon the European Union and Member States to make concrete progress in the fight against homelessness and supports specific priorities for action.

FEANTSA and its members welcome the adoption of the Written Declaration, which has received the support of a majority of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across the political spectrum and representing all EU countries. Freek Spinnewijn, Director of FEANTSA, said that he hoped that the Written Declaration would help to translate the EU commitment to address homelessness into concrete action and visible progress at the different levels.

The Written Declaration was launched by five MEPs – Britta Thomsen (Denmark, Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats), Liz Lynne (UK, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats), Karima Delli (France, Greens/European Free Alliance), Ilda Figueiredo (Portugal, European United Left/Nordic Green Left) and Jacek Protasiewicz (Poland, Christian Democrats).

The adoption of the Written Declaration follows a European Consensus Conference on Homelessness organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU on the 9th and 10th December, which delivered a European consensus for future EU policy action in the field of homelessness. The Declaration also reinforces the European Commission's commitment to address homelessness as a priority of the EU2020 strategy as outlined in the EC Communication on the European Platform Against Poverty.

For further details, please visit FEANTSA web site www.feantsa.org
Or contact Suzannah Young Suzannah.young@feantsa.org

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Notes for Editors:

1. FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless is an umbrella of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe. It is the only major European network that focuses exclusively on homelessness at the European level.

2. Full text of Written Declaration 61/2010 on an EU Homelessness Strategy:

Declaration of the European Parliament of 16 December 2010 on an EU homelessness strategy

The European Parliament,
– having regard to its declaration of 22 April 2008 on ending street homelessness(1) ,
– having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,
A. whereas homelessness continues to affect people in all EU Member States and is an unacceptable violation of fundamental human rights,
B. whereas 2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion,

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1. Calls again on the Council to commit by the end of 2010 to ending street homelessness by 2015;

2. Calls on the European Commission to develop an ambitious EU homelessness strategy and to support Member States in developing effective national strategies following the guidelines of the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion adopted in March 2010 and as part of the EU 2020;

3. Calls on Eurostat to collect EU homelessness data;

4. Supports the following priorities for action: no one sleeping rough; no one living in emergency accommodation for longer than the period of an 'emergency'; no one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for a successful move-on; no one leaving an institution without housing options; no young people becoming homeless as a result of the transition to independent living;

5. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories(2) , to the Council, the Commission and the Parliaments of the Member States.

(1) OJ C 259 E, 29.10.2009, p. 19.
(2) The list of signatories is published in Annex 3 to the Minutes of 16 December 2010 (P7_PV-PROV(2010)12-16(ANN3)).

See: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0499&language=EN

4. For more information on the European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, please visit: http://feantsa.horus.be/code/EN/pg.asp?Page=1301 and http://www.eutrio.be/consensus-conference-homelessness

4. More information about the European Platform Against Poverty can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=959&furtherNews=yes

5. More information on the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is available at: http://www.2010againstpoverty.eu/?langid=en, and information on the European Coalition of Social NGOs for 2010 can be found at: http://www.endpoverty.eu/-HOME-.html.

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