
EU Parliament: 700,000 homeless persons in Europe; inclusion, work and healthcare policies needed

Homeless people - a social emergency; and violence against women - an issue that must be addressed decisively and without delay. These are two of the items in the order of business of the European Parliament that is holding its plenary meeting from this afternoon to Thursday. The session will again take place in a hybrid mode - in person and online. The session will open with a vote on a draft resolution to address the problem of homelessness and eradicate housing exclusion across the EU by 2030. The non-legislative draft text, prepared by the EP Committee on Petitions, highlights the precarious living situation of over 700,000 persons who face homelessness each night in Europe, representing a 70% increase over a decade. "Housing is a fundamental human right - a statement from the EP reads - so stronger action is required from the Commission and Member States in order to end homelessness" with measures aimed at fostering inclusion. To reach this goal, Parliament recommends "increasing EU funding for Member States; working on prevention and early intervention; providing equal access to public services and education; supporting labour market integration; decriminalising homelessness; and implementing long-term national strategies". On Wednesday, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, a debate will be held to draw attention to the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic. MEPs will debate the latest developments in the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. "At a time when rising cases of domestic violence in many EU countries have been exacerbated further by lockdowns, Parliament is likely to urge Member States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so".

Gianni Borsa