

## CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN INITIATIVE (without an impact assessment)

This document aims to inform the public and stakeholders about the Commission's work, so they can provide feedback and participate effectively in consultation activities.

We ask these groups to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions, and to give us any relevant information they may have.

<b>TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE</b>	Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Fighting Housing Exclusion
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	DG EMPL D1
<b>LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE</b>	Council Recommendation
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	Q2 2026
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<a href="https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/homelessness_en">https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/homelessness_en</a>

*This document is for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by this document, including its timing, are subject to change.*

### A. Political context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

#### Political context

The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR) in its principle 19 on housing and assistance for the homeless calls for i/ access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality for those in need; ii/ the right for vulnerable people to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction; iii/ adequate shelter and services to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion. These commitments are linked to the broader EU social policy agenda as presented in other EPSR principles.

The EPSR Action Plan envisaged a [European Platform on Combatting Homelessness](#) (“the Platform”), which was launched by the 2021 [Lisbon Declaration](#) under the Portuguese Presidency. This declaration was signed by all EU Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, social partners and civil society, and established a shared European agenda on working towards ending homelessness by 2030.

The 2023 [Avilés Declaration](#) under the Spanish Presidency invited the European Commission to continue in its supporting and promoting role in the areas of homelessness prevention and the fight against housing exclusion, while Member States confirmed their commitment towards the achievement of the 2030 goal set by the Lisbon Declaration.

The [European Affordable Housing Plan](#), adopted by the European Commission in December 2025, announced that the Commission will issue a proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion to: (i) support vulnerable people in precarious housing situations, and (ii) prevent and address homelessness.

This initiative will build upon the work of the Platform and will be adopted together with the forthcoming Anti-Poverty Strategy.

#### Problem the initiative aims to tackle

Housing exclusion and homelessness are some of the most severe forms of poverty and social exclusion, with profound consequences for health, well-being and life expectancy. They are complex and dynamic challenges caused by an interplay of interrelated drivers, including structural and institutional factors, together with individual vulnerabilities.

The current cost-of-living crisis, in particular the rising cost of housing and utilities, combined with shortages of affordable and social housing, persistent inequalities and labour market precariousness, and demographic changes, have led to a rising trend in the number of people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness in several Member States. According to the latest national data available, approximately 1 million people in the EU are affected by homelessness.

While the responsibility for housing policy lies primarily with Member States, homelessness and housing exclusion are challenges of a common nature across the EU. These challenges are closely linked to EU objectives in the fields of social inclusion, education, employment, health, equality, territorial cohesion and competitiveness. Ending homelessness and housing exclusion would help to achieve the objectives of the EPSR and its [Action Plan](#), particularly the 2030 headline target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million, out of which at least 5 million should be children, together to the ambition expressed by the Commission President in her 2025 State of the Union address to help eradicate poverty by 2050, as well as the EU's commitment to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The Council Recommendation would provide Member States with a comprehensive reference framework at EU level to help them reach these objectives as well as the goals outlined in the Lisbon Declaration.

The aim of the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation is to underline major policy principles and specific orientations, and will propose them to Member States for consideration, enabling them to design and implement effective and efficient national strategic frameworks to prevent and address housing exclusion and homelessness; or where relevant, to strengthen existing ones. It will emphasise person-centred, housing-led and integrated approaches to support people in precarious housing situations in both urban and rural areas. These may include for example young people, including students, with low financial means, families with children (including single parents) and older people in precarious housing situations, the long-term unemployed and those furthest from the labour market (including third-country nationals), persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ individuals facing discrimination and Roma communities.

## **Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)**

### **Legal basis**

The proposal is based on Article 292 TFEU, in conjunction with Article 153(1), point (j) TFEU, which mandates the EU to support and complement the activities of Member States in combating social exclusion.

A Council Recommendation is an appropriate legal instrument to provide guidance on policy and operational priorities and promote convergence in delivering the results, while respecting national powers in social policies, including access to housing.

The Recommendation will not affect the right of Member States to maintain or introduce more ambitious policies.

### **Practical need for EU action**

Homelessness and housing exclusion are challenges faced by all Member States, driven by common structural trends. These challenges require coordinated, cross-sectoral responses. While Member States are best placed to design and implement policies according to their national contexts, EU-level action provides added value by: (i) providing an overall policy framework, (ii) facilitating mutual learning, (iii) promoting evidence-based approaches, (iv) supporting data comparability, and (v) strengthening political commitment.

This EU-level framework translating the work of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness into concrete recommendations is needed given that, while several Member States already have strategic frameworks in place, significant gaps remain in coverage, coherence, and effectiveness. Moreover, the free movement of people within the EU means that homelessness increasingly has a cross-border dimension.

The current housing crisis risks increasing the rate of homelessness, housing exclusion, and social exclusion. The argument in favour of EU-level action in this area is strengthened by the increasing cost of inaction, both for individuals and for governments. EU-level action is complementary to – and will be carried out in close cooperation with – EU Member States at national, regional, and local levels.

Combating homelessness and housing exclusion is also necessary to achieve the objectives of the forthcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, of which the Council Recommendation is an integral part. The Recommendation will also complement the actions of the European Affordable Housing Plan by providing guidance on the design or review of national policy frameworks based on person-centred, housing-led and integrated approaches.

## **B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how**

The Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion will serve as a key reference framework for the Member States in their efforts to implement the goals of: (i) Principle 19 [EPSR](#); (ii) the [Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness](#); (iii) the [European Affordable Housing Plan](#); (iv) the forthcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Recommendation will help Member States to: (i) draw up national strategic frameworks and measures to prevent and address housing exclusion and homelessness, and (ii) support vulnerable people in precarious housing situations.

It will achieve this by emphasising person-centred, housing-led and integrated approaches, in order to support access to stable housing solutions along with the provision of essential support services, including with Housing First programmes.

While fully respecting national competences, the Recommendation seeks to: (i) translate existing political commitments into concrete guidance, (ii) strengthen governance frameworks, and (iii) promote convergence towards effective approaches to fighting housing exclusion. By doing this, the proposal will help to accelerate progress in preventing and reducing homelessness and housing exclusion.

The Council Recommendation will help Member States to develop effective policy responses across the policy lifecycle to fight housing exclusion and eradicate homelessness according to their specific needs. It will achieve this by promoting policy action in the three following areas:

- Improved data and evidence: the Recommendation will promote more systematic, comprehensive and comparable data collection based on consistent definitions and a common analytical framework. This will make it easier to understand the scale and specifics of homelessness and housing exclusion, thus enabling more targeted interventions and funding, including at European level. This will include robust data and evidence on causes, scope, and types of homelessness and housing exclusion.
- Policy formulation and design: the Recommendation will invite Member States to set out cross-sectoral and regionally appropriate strategic frameworks to tackle systemic factors such as poverty and the lack of affordable or social housing, develop preventive measures, address precarious housing situations and ensure sustainable exits from homelessness, addressing the specific housing needs of vulnerable groups.
- Implementation and monitoring: the Recommendation will provide guidelines for a governance and implementation framework at national level together with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

**Likely impacts**

The Council Recommendation will have a likely impact on the approaches taken by the Member States to address housing exclusion and homelessness. It would shift action and political focus away from temporary responses and towards integrated, permanent housing solutions, effectively reducing housing exclusion and homelessness.

**Future monitoring**

The implementation of the Council Recommendation will be monitored through existing frameworks at EU level – notably the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness and the European Semester, without prejudice to its future outcomes.

The results be assessed and monitored based on available Eurostat indicators and improved and more comparable data collection at national level that this Recommendation aims to promote.

**C. Better regulation**

**Impact assessment**

An impact assessment is not planned, as the chosen instrument – a Council Recommendation – is non-binding and the choice of implementation will be with the Member States. The proposal for the Council Recommendation will be supported by a staff working document accompanying the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

**Consultation strategy**

A public consultation is not required for this type of initiative. The proposal for the Council Recommendation will use the results of the public consultation on the Anti-Poverty Strategy as well as the public consultation on the European Affordable Housing Plan alongside this dedicated call for evidence.