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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Alternatives to Europe's sub-standard IDP collective centres

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Ms Tina ACKETOFT and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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Of the 2.5 million people in displacement around Europe as a result of unresolved conflicts, some 390.000 IDPs are still accommodated in "collective centres" and have sometimes been there for decades in indecent conditions. Tens of thousands of others continue living without security of tenure in informal settlements and makeshift shelters, thus making the lack of adequate housing a major concern in protracted IDP situations.

The "collective centres", many of them former public buildings, were never intended for long-term residence. Most of them are dilapidated, crowded and unhygienic after being occupied but not renovated for some 20 years. The remaining residents are often the most vulnerable among the IDP population (elderly, mentally or physically handicapped, traumatised individuals, etc), which explains their dependence to assistance and their difficulty to find more suitable accommodation.

While recognising the efforts that many Governments have made to improve conditions in collective centres and to reduce the number of IDPs living in them, only small numbers have actually benefited from these schemes. Evictions from these centres are becoming commonplace, with the courts increasingly supporting the rights of owners of buildings in line with successive European Court of Human Rights judgments on the issue.

The issue of adequate housing for IDPs is closely linked to support to local integration, which is an option that states hosting IDPs are often reluctant to support for political reasons.

Keeping IDPs lodged in sub-standard collective centres offers no sustainable solution. Adequate housing is a right independent from the political issues surrounding protracted displacement. The Parliamentary Assembly should make recommendations for comprehensive and targeted assistance responding to the specific needs of this vulnerable population. With solidarity, Council of Europe member states can help promote and find alternatives to these collective centres. The Council of Europe together with its Development Bank can find practical and financial solutions.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

ACKETOFT Tina, Sweden, ALDE
BAGHDASARYAN Gagik, Armenia, ALDE
BARDINA PAU Josep Anton, Andorra, ALDE
CEDERBRATT Mikael, Sweden, EPP/CD
CHRISTOFFERSEN Lise, Norway, SOC
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
CLAPPISON James, United Kingdom, EDG
GUNNARSSON Jonas, Sweden, SOC
GUŢU Ana, Republic of Moldova, ALDE
HAGEN Christoph, Austria, NR
HANSON Margus, Estonia, ALDE
KAUMA Pia, Finland, EPP/CD
LUNDGREN Kerstin, Sweden, ALDE
MARTY Dick, Switzerland, ALDE
MATEU PI Meritxell, Andorra, ALDE
MAYER Edgar, Austria, EPP/CD
MEMECAN Nursuna, Turkey, ALDE
MÜRI Felix, Switzerland, ALDE
O'SULLIVAN Maureen, Ireland, UEL
POULSEN Jørgen, Denmark, ALDE
SCHUSTER Marina, Germany, ALDE
SOUKOLA Ismo, Finland, NR
STRIK Tineke, Netherlands, SOC
VAREIKIS Egidijus, Lithuania, EPP/CD

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group