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Eradicating extreme child poverty in Europe: an international obligation and a moral duty

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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

The economic crisis has hit children extremely hard. It has an impact not only on their well-being but also on the equality of opportunity to which every child is entitled. In the European Union, on average, one in four children is living in poverty; four out of ten children are affected in the poorest countries. Children are at the forefront of having to cope with poverty despite the commitments made by States to eradicate it.

While poverty in Europe has fallen slightly over the last two years and worldwide extreme poverty rates have halved since the year 2000 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), extreme poverty continues to rise in the European Union. There are eight million children at risk of extreme poverty. This increase is worrying as it follows the increase in and emergence of various forms of acute insecurity. The time has come to assess the results of national and regional policies to combat extreme poverty.

Extreme poverty among children is also the cause of inequalities, including in health, housing and education. Over the past 20 years, no country in Europe has made any progress in reducing levels of excess body weight and obesity.

The proportion of children at risk of poverty remains unacceptably higher among Roma and migrants. Furthermore, what will be the effects of climate change once it affects children?

The Parliamentary Assembly calls on all member States to honour their commitments to eradicate child poverty. It calls for sustained efforts against extreme poverty in order not to sacrifice a "lost generation" with the serious risks that this entails for social cohesion and political stability. The increase in cases of extreme poverty carries with it the threat of the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next.

