



HOUSING EUROPE MEETINGS

MARCH 2017

WEDNESDAY 8th MARCH 2017

10:00 – 17:00: EU HOUSING RETROFIT DAY (see programme attached) (venue: House of Dutch Provinces, 59 – 61 Rue de Trèves, Brussels)

The one-day workshop was organized by Housing Europe as part of the PROF/TRAC project and it aimed at answering the following questions: How can energy renovations become financially attractive? Why does the energy transition start at home and relies on every single tenant? How can housing providers and other building professionals escape the procurement labyrinth? How can the revised EU energy legislation deliver on skills and innovation?

The workshop addressed in particular lessons learned on the questions above echoing the overall mood for a little less regulation, a little more production please...

[Read our Storify report and check out the presentations held at the event](#)

18:00 – 19:00: Visit of the new passive social housing “la plume” in Brussels (organised by SLRB) (Rue Lacaille 2, Brussels)

20:00 Dinner for Housing Europe Members

THURSDAY 9th MARCH 2017

9:00 – 17:00: HOUSING EUROPE WORKING COMMITTEES (Venue: Social Platform Meeting Room, Square de Meeus n°18)

9:00 – 10:30: Economic, finance and internal market committee

- EIB/EFSI funding to promote integrated housing approach for care services (DI): presentation by Thomas Signal, EASPD



Thomas started his presentation by saying that the social services sector has gone through a lot of cuts in funding since 2008. There is also less private investment, however the demand is growing for Care and Support services.

Not only maintaining of the quality is important but the modernisation of the infrastructures as well. Instead of institutionalised care we need community based care services.

The regulation of European Fund for Strategic Investment ("Juncker fund") refers to social infrastructures saying that the increased access to financing should be of particular benefit to SMEs, including (...) social economy enterprises and non-profit organisations" (Recital 17). However in reality under the Infrastructure & Innovation Window we cannot see investment in social care services and under the SME window we see that only 4 % were invested in social infrastructure so far.

EASPD Members report that they need access to financing but they lack information about the EFSI tool. Based on the feedback, EASPD prepared a briefing on what needs to be done which include better targeting EFSI instruments to sector needs and capacity and Inclusion of Social Services experts in EFSI procedures.

This year EASPD is planning to organize 6 national and one EU-level conferences in cooperation with EIB, EP, HLG SI, Social Services Europe and also Housing Europe.

Thomas' [detailed presentation is available here](#)

Our Members who have experience with EFSI/would like to present ideas are invited to contact Edit Lakatos edit.lakatos@housingeurope.eu

Questions for participants: Do you have experience with EFSI/EIB loan in your country? What could be improved in implementation?

UK: Housing associations got recently 5.5 billion EIB loans. The worrying question for the UK now is to how much money they can access after Brexit.

Austria: right now the State would like to get 500 million euros loan from the EIB to build 30 000 new dwellings. The other part of the support would come from a State guarantee but there is a problem with the agreement: the State support would qualify as State Aid. The plan is to declare the project in the frame of SGEI.

Better access is needed to funding. An idea to set up a dedicated bank would facilitate the process for housing providers.

Germany: Hamburg recently got support energy efficient renovations (100 million euros from EIB and 100 million euros of national support)



At the end of the discussion Julien emphasized the difference between the traditional EIB loan and the EFSI tool. While the EIB loan is public funding which is invested in low risk profile projects, the EFSI tool aims to attract private capital to invest in high risk profile projects. Housing Europe recently prepared an info toolkit for Members which gives a step-by-step guidance on how to apply for EFSI support. The tool is available on our website <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-909/making-use-of-the-european-plan-for-strategic-investment>.

- Housing Europe initiative on financial valuation of social housing activities.
Presentation by Francis Deplace, DELPHIS

Francis represents a French Social Housing Association, Delphis. He spoke about concrete examples regarding the wide social impact of social housing. Francis underlined that there is a thin line between cost, price and value of housing which is key to measure the actual impact of social housing. Based on the research project (project AcTerr that observed 13 associations' work in 2013-2016) he prepared a toolbox that other housing associations in Southern France use right now and can increase their social impact even more. The housing association does not need to hire a new person in order to do the measuring because it is an easy methodology. The municipalities would like to impose the system to all companies.

Presentation available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Yb8SWGtmE7R0s4STRyZGVhV2c/view>

Discussion with Members

Germany: The CSR reporting is country wide but they see it rather as a burden

The Netherlands: The country recently (in 2016) issued social housing impact bonds. Italy (Federcasa) is also considering that.

- Presentation by James Thorogood, Creating an impact investment framework for social housing - Could an impact investment framework create trust between the two?, Housing Europe and University of Utrecht

James is currently doing a research at Housing Europe until June 2017. The work aims at analysing the possibilities of creating trust between private capital & social housing.

Capital can be attracted from private sources, public sources like EIB, CEB... But the main question is: How to attract that money to our sector? Housing Europe Members have different visions, different needs.



Questions for participants; How do non-public sources of capital funding social housing work in your country?

What are the risks related to non-public sources of capital funding social housing? Risks of social outcomes and financial risks

Ireland: The problem is that the EIB terms are still less favourable than a State intermediary's. The solution could be to create a bank in Ireland dedicated to give access to EIB money more easily.

Germany: Establishing a cooperative bank which would serve only housing issues is a good idea.

Austria: Promotional system could work. EIB loan is already cheap so we need to make maximum use of it.

Italy: We need an alternative aggregator to be set up at national level (because EIB is looking for easy solutions). Another idea is to access more technical assistance.

James is going to work on alternative scenarios and any input/comments could help his research. If you have ideas, feel free to contact him at jamesthoro@gmail.com

- Updates on VAT public consultation from Virginie Toussain (USH)

Virginie briefly presented the key points of the VAT public consultation ([detailed presentation available on the website](#)).

Concerning VAT rates, there are 2 options: reduced rates or standard rate. For public, social or cooperative housing, Annex III of the directive provides **2 possibilities of reduced rates**:

- provision, construction, renovation and alteration of housing, as part of a social policy
- renovation and repairing of private dwellings, excluding materials which account for a significant part of the value of the service supplied

Member States are often not respecting the rules--> more than 40 infringement procedures recently. The European Commission proposes to give more freedom to Member States with 2 options :

- Extension and regular review of the list of goods and services eligible for reduced rates
- Abolition of the list

More freedom to MS on the number of reduced rates and their level, in the respect of fair competition (which may need some safeguards)-New basic rules needed

For us, it would be beneficial if the existing reduced rates were maintained, but on which conditions and how in a new system?



The deadline of the consultation is 20/03/2017, access it here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ReformofVATrates2017>

Please send your comments to Julien.dijol@housingeurope.eu until 15 March 2017.

- Updates on Basel III rules from Julien Dijol (Housing Europe)

Housing Europe had a meeting with the European Commission dedicated Committee. The next step is to draft a follow-up letter to this Committee in which we highlight the societal impact and non-speculative nature of social housing providers.

Note from Denmark : the Basel III rules are only relevant for you if your organization is funded by private banks.

- Update on State Aid from Sebastien Garnier (Aedes)
 - The question is on the table at the EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership.
 - On 15 March the European Court will make a decision on the Dutch case.
 - Concerning the SGEI definition review : Aedes had talks with the European Commission but at the moment there is no intention to review the definition any time soon.

11:00 – 12:30: Social Affairs committee

- Exchange of views on the place of housing in the forthcoming national elections campaigns in 2017 (France, Germany, the Netherlands)

France-Carine Puyol, USH

USH recently presented its campaign called 'Oui au logement social'-Yes to social housing. At the same time they also launched an online petition which already got 14000 signatures. The petition is available until the end of March at <https://www.change.org/p/oui-au-logement-social>

Germany-Klaus Lugger, GdW

GdW is actively working on that as well. They picked different housing topics for the different months. For example March is the month of construction, May is the month of climate protection.

Public panel discussions are also planned with MPs. Finally, GdW will publish a 10 facts booklet soon.

Netherlands-Sebastien Garnier, Aedes

The main relevant topic now is the social housing tax. Some parties would like to increase it, some do not and would like to introduce incentives. Aedes would like to push for more regional freedom.

Detailed Presentations are accessible on the website.



Question for participants: Do you have such development in your countries? How populist movements influence your everyday work?

Italy: Elections are coming up next year. The parties have some plans about the metropolitan areas but not specifically on social housing. The narrative is still negative towards immigrants.

Armenia: The elections will take place this April and the system will turn into parliamentary. The President recently visited the EU to talk about next steps.

The elections campaigns do not highlight housing issues but social investment is on the Agenda. Therefore, ASBA would need the support of Housing Europe to echo more strongly the importance of housing providers in Armenia.

- Presentation of the AMIF proposal on integration of migrants and housing (Abderrahim Khairi, Housing Europe)

The AMIF Programme regularly publishes calls for proposals AMIF in the area of Integration of third-country nationals. As Housing Europe Members are already active on the ground, we would like to prepare a project called Welcome Home which would aim to foster knowledge and experience and to stimulate innovative approaches with a particular focus on the integrating dimension of housing providers.

The planned activities would include the followings:

- ✓ Conduct a comparative study on how national legislations deal with refugees'
- ✓ Gather an overview of lessons learned in Europe on Housing and Integration;
- ✓ Create an 'Online Knowledge Hub'
- ✓ Video interviews with individuals living in the homes in order to give them a platform to tell their stories;
- ✓ Organize study visits;
- ✓ Compile a list of enabling factors for successful projects; etc.

The partners so far are: Housing Europe, Union Sociale pour l'Habitat (USH), Federcasa, Bolton at Home and ATC Piemonte Centrale. Forum Réfugiés is interested and Socius were also contacted.

SABO and AEDES; BSHF can support us by sending a support letter.

The difficulty in the project preparing is that Housing Europe has not experience in migration related project writing. More cross sectorial partners needed to be able to submit, finally we need more expertise on budget and work package management. **More information on the proposal is available on the website.**



Question for participants: What are the latest developments regarding the situation with migrants and refugees? Have you carried out recent initiatives or projects in this field?

The Netherlands: very active on migration issue. The country has still a lot of refugees and the waiting lists are increasing. A recent innovative project from Utrecht is helping to change the narrative towards the refugees (SOCIOS project).

Austria: Most of refugees still live in interim accommodation. The country needs more affordable housing and not only because of the refugees but also because of the growing number of European migrants, low-income Austrians.

2 recent projects: In Tirol a programme to build housing without a balcony and lift (in order to lower costs and quicken the process)

In Vienna, the plan is to build non-permanent housing (for 15 years) on the land of the municipality. However, no provider would like to apply because of the non-permanent nature of planned houses.

Ireland: There are only 500 Syrians in the country and only 100 live in social housing. The key issue is rather health, education and language skills.

UK: NHF just set up a refugee Network composed of member housing associations who are working on the topic.

Armenia: At the moment there are 26000 refugees in the country. ASBA is doing integration work is a normal activity. More info at www.asba.am

Germany: Not the country is a bit relieved. The State enabled the housing sector to build quicker and not to include additional standards to the building at the first phase (such as balcony). They would come after.

GdW run a project with a local University to develop a course for newcomers. The course is about how to live in rental homes. Secondly, together with the Ministry of Housing they launched a Prize of best practices on integration. The Prize will be given in June at the national conference. The booklet of the best projects will be also published soon.

Italy: Treats the refugee situation as emergency (cooperatives use private homes) but long-term housing and integration would be also needed.

France: There is no news. Most people would not like to stay in the country.

Denmark: The narrative is going to the wrong direction. However, the municipalities provided some extra funding to housing associations for building cheaper housing. De-



regulation is also on the Agenda. Finally, Denmark made an app on how to be a good neighbour.

- Update on the European pillar of social rights (Edit Lakatos, Housing Europe)

Housing Europe recently contributed to the public consultation launched by the European Commission.

See HE position paper here: <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-842/towards-a-more-preventive-efficient-reactive-social-protection> In the text we emphasized that the future EU Pillar should promote a more preventative, efficient and reactive social protection. Indeed, the EU Pillar can help supporting our demands (make cities more liveable, inclusive). We also contributed to the Parliamentary Report and met MEP Maria Joao Rodriguez and MEP Tamas Meszerics to discuss our position. Finally, Sorch Edwards also attended the high level meeting in January 2017 and exchanged in a personal meeting with Commissioner Thyssen.

The next steps: Final Proposal of the European Commission is to be expected on 26 April 2017. President Juncker is going to host a Jobs and Growth conference on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg.

See detailed presentation on the website

- Update on the Housing First Hub, Ruth Owen, FEANTSA

Ruth briefly presented what 'housing first' means: it is a model to solve homelessness. There is a 2-sided package:

- Rapid/immediate access to housing
- On-going, flexible, multidisciplinary support to the person

The 'Housing Europe First Hub' project would like to build on this scheme. Its mission is to scale up Housing First in Europe to prevent and end homelessness. Hub Partners (Housing Europe is an Advisor) are committed to the core principles of Housing First as defined in the Housing First Europe Guide.

The Hub will support learning communities and Housing First networks to honestly share knowledge and experience. All organisations are welcome to be involved in Hub activities

Relevance for our Members:



In Europe, social housing companies provide most of the housing for Housing First projects!

Key stakeholders in scale-up of the model: Some already active/interested in the Hub – Est Métropole Habitat, AEDES

The Hub can help address common challenges through training, practice and research activities and is an opportunity to shape the Housing First agenda in EU.

[See detailed presentation on the website](#)

Lunch break

13:30 – 15:00: Urban Affairs Committee

- Update on the Housing Partnership affordability kit (Agata Krause, EUROCITIES)

The toolkit is the proposal of Housing Europe to the Housing Partnership. The added value of the Partnership is that the cities work together with different stakeholders and the European Commission and each Partnership participant have equal opportunities to influence the outcomes.

If the toolkit of Housing Europe is accepted by the other partners, we would be leading the implementation as well, thus directly influence the EU policy making.

The draft toolkit has the following parts:

- Background part: Macro-economic tendencies in Europe, governance in cities
- Solution part: Best practices on how to deliver housing affordability (What are the local examples that work best?)

The challenge about the toolkit: How to create the online platform? The Partners have different views to emphasize.

The main question to our Members: What would you like to see as actions to achieve affordable housing? What does Europe need to do?

Next steps: 22-23 March-Partnership meeting in Brussels

[See ppt presentation attached](#)

Question for participants: Do you have suggestions on how we could improve the kit?

Comments from Aedes: It would be good to focus on different categories/thematic of best practices and also to divide them by decision making levels (national, regional, local)



- Presentation of one of the first projects selected under the Urban Innovative Actions call (Integration of Migrants); Presentation by Niene Oepkes and Jan Braat, city of Utrecht

See our dedicated section on UIA here: <http://www.housingeurope.eu/section-106/uiia>

Utrecht recently got funding from Urban Innovative Actions for an innovative project called Plan Einstein (Refugee Launch Pad).

At the beginning tensions was very present between communities → 7-8 years to wait to access social housing. Therefore, the city needed a shift in approach.

The 'Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad' provides this shift because it is a bottom-up project and it is inclusive. One part of the Pad is bringing together refugee and local young people in a originally segregated neighbourhood and make it lively again. The project was carried out by the SOCIUS Youth methodology: Live Together, Learn Together. The success factor of the project is the expertise (psychological model) brought by Oxford University. It started on 1 November 2016 with 38 Young People. For more information please go to: [Http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/utrecht](http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/utrecht)

Questions for participants: what is your experience in working with cities in designing integrating development strategies? In general in which areas do you see an added value in cooperating with cities?

No particular comment.

- Update on Sustainable Development Goals and Housing (Edit Lakatos, Housing Europe)

Since 2016, Edit is monitoring the implementation of the SDG's, very often called the Agenda 2030. The Agenda was adopted by UN Member States in September 2015 which has 17 large goals with specific targets.

In 2016, more than 90 civil society organizations came together in Brussels (also Housing Europe) and we formed together the SDG Watch Europe, a cross-sectoral alliance which aims to monitor and support the implementation by the EU and its Member States. This is a good opportunity for Housing Europe because:

- ✓ We can engage with other civil societies towards a more sustainable Europe
- ✓ Advocate for the policies required-shape the new EU level structures
- ✓ Push for actions needed in our sector: the Agenda can help to support our demands



Among the goals the most relevant ones are Goal 1 (reducing poverty); goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 11 ('Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums') and visibility needs to be increased on our impact delivering these goals.

Our key achievements in this group are the following: we contributed to the EU public consultation, we exchanged letters with Commissioner Timmelmans and we attended High level meetings with MEPs supporting urban development (ex. Jean Lambert, Julie Ward, Brando Benifei). Finally, we participate in Multi-stakeholder Platform set up by Commissioner Timmelmans.

The next step is to see how the EU Strategy will look like (publication date: June 2017). *See more info on our website:* <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-810/housing-europe-and-the-sdg-watch-europe> and here: <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-888/implementation-of-the-sustainable-development-goals>

If you know about national initiatives monitoring the implementation of the SDG/you participate in such initiative, or you have suggestions on what we need to emphasize as part of the Multi-stakeholder Platform, feel free to contact edit.lakatos@housingeurope.eu

- Update on the ISHF 2017 (Michalis Goudis, Housing Europe)

Michalis shared with members what the International Social Housing Festival (ISHF) will be all about and what will be the role of Housing Europe within it. The ISHF aims to be a global celebration of the long tradition of decent, affordable housing for all aiming to generate convincing responses to current and future challenges, focusing on the themes of migration, segregation and diversity. Housing Europe that is coordinating the work on communications will hold its annual conference and its General Assembly within the framework of the Festival. In particular, on June 15th an International Conference will be jointly organized with our Dutch member, Aedes on the topic 'Social Housing: Looking back, moving forward', while during the *Ignite Session* Housing Europe members shape the work plan for the year to come. On June 16th, the GA will take place followed by a series of study visits in Amsterdam. More information will be available by the end of March, concluded Michalis inviting members to save the dates.

15:30 – 17:00: Meeting of the Housing Europe Observatory

- Preparation of the 2017 state of housing report (Alice Pittini, Housing Europe)

Alice briefly presented the timeline of the work:

The publication itself will be presented ideally at the end of September (when President Juncker presents the state of the Union speech). We aim at an event at the European



Parliament and we must identify a date and MEPs interested in supporting the event as soon as possible.

The Report of 2015 was already a success, and was quoted in 10 publications.

What are your expectations? What would you change compared to the report of 2015?

The idea of Alice is to put stronger policy relevance in the new report and involve more Members.

Other ideas from Members:

- Turn upside the 'How can housing contribute to objectives' down and put more emphasis on How the EU can support our demands.
 - Thematic focus points-10 facts by theme + related interview
 - More visuals, nicer graphs, long-term data/trends where possible
 - Key message of commissioners, politicians
 - Include non-EU countries where we have members, in the country profiles
 - Write also about partnerships (housing providers working with local authorities, services providers...)
 - Balance between good and bad news
 - What do housing providers deliver more than housing? 'housing plus' approach
 - Reflect on affordability from point of view of trends in incomes and the wider context of housing financialization
- Update on ENLIGHTEN and Proposal for an HE myth busters on social housing (Alice Pittini, Housing Europe)

The Enlighten is a project supported by Horizon 2020 and has still one year to go. We are following the research work and sending inputs to make it more relevant to our members. Alice and Michalis shared with members the idea to develop a series of so called "Mythbusters" with the overall aim to prove that arguments that are commonly used in public debate about social housing across Europe are just myths/stereotypes. It's a communication activity that can feed into both the policy and the research work of Housing Europe. Regarding the format, this shall be an online tool that can be automatically translated. The whole tool may be developed as a deliverable of the ENLIGHTEN project, in which Housing Europe is a partner. An example was presented to members who will be consulted as this project will be evolving.

- ICSH request regarding Eurostat classification of social housing providers (Donal Mc Manus)



Donal presented the results of the ICSH survey which was prepared to see how the classification can potentially effect Housing Europe Members. Normally in the different Member States the Central Statistical Office is asked to look at non-profit housing providers and classify their debt either as public debt or not. This distinction is very important and in the case of Ireland it risks undermining the current model for providing social housing by voluntary housing associations. The survey results show that many Members are concerned about the off-on balance sheet question. 6 Members are off balance sheet and 2 are on balance sheet. The ICSH is now working on a fact sheet on the results.

- Update on Housing Europe Expert Networks (Sorcha Edwards, Housing Europe)

The idea of the Network is to establish an ad-hoc working group that would be open to Members and external experts. The focus of the group would be to look for alternative housing solutions and brainstorm together on solutions in countries where social housing does not exist yet.

The first meeting was organised in October 2016 in Tirana. The next step is to organize a follow-up conference in October 2017. We will send a request email to all Members soon.

How could we improve the idea?

Netherlands: Members could send experts to another Member's office to give guidance on a specific theme.