

# Housing for All & Services of General Economic Interest

Sorcha Edwards, Secretary General



# About us in brief

**Network** of national and regional housing provider federations

- 4,500 public, voluntary housing organisations
- 28,000 cooperative housing organisations

**43 members in 23 countries (19 EU Member States)**

Manage **26 million dwellings**, about **11% of existing dwellings in the EU**

## Vision

**Access to decent and affordable housing for all in communities which are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and where all are enabled to reach their full potential.**



# Structure

Housing Europe  
Observatory (Research)



Social Affairs

Urban Affairs



Energy &  
Construction



Financial Affairs

- Housing Europe shall be **administered** by a **Board of Directors**
- It is **organized in five (5) thematic Working Committees** open to all members

## OUR MEMBERS



## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### ARMENIA

ASBA  
[www.asba.am](http://www.asba.am)

### NORWAY

NBBL  
[www.nbbl.no](http://www.nbbl.no)

### SWITZERLAND

SVW  
[www.svw.ch](http://www.svw.ch)



### FESOCOLAB

**FLW**  
[www.flw.be](http://www.flw.be)  
**SLRB**  
[www.slrbririsnet.be](http://www.slrbririsnet.be)  
**SWL**  
[www.swl.be](http://www.swl.be)  
**VMSW**  
[www.vmsw.be](http://www.vmsw.be)



### BL

[www.bl.dk](http://www.bl.dk)



### AEDES

[www.aedesnet.nl](http://www.aedesnet.nl)



### FederCasa

[www.federCasa.it](http://www.federCasa.it)

### FEDERABITAZIONE

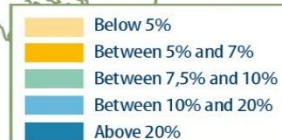
[www.federabitazione.confcooperative.it](http://www.federabitazione.confcooperative.it)

### Legacoop Abitanti

[www.legacoopabitanti.coop](http://www.legacoopabitanti.coop)

### AGCI-ABITAZIONE

[www.agci.it](http://www.agci.it)



Stock owned as rental or cooperatives by CECODHAS members as % of the total housing stock in each country.

# Our added value

## Advocacy

Through the constant **monitoring** of the work of the EU in the field of housing and related **advocacy** work, **being heard** at the top level by developing a positive message to EU leaders.

## Capacity Building

**Conferences, workshops, study visits**, exchange of **good practices, toolkits**, e.g. EU election 2014 [#HousingEP14](#), funding opportunities etc...

## Publications

**Research briefings**, social housing country **profiles, reports, toolkits**. The observatory identifies and analyses key trends and research needs in the field of housing and social housing at European level

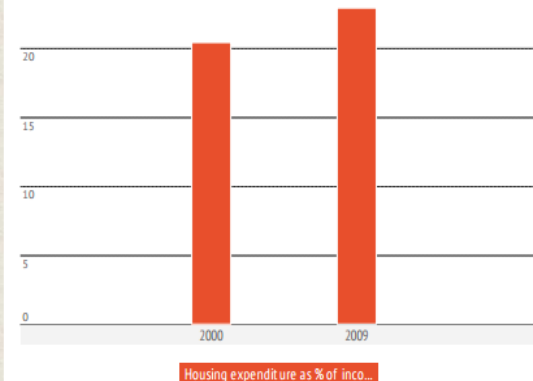
### It is important, because...

 **120 million**  
Europeans at risk of poverty

 **33.8%**  
Europeans feel that they are facing disproportionate housing costs

 **52 million**  
People in the EU unable to keep their homes adequately warm

### Growing housing costs



# SGEI legal framework

- PROTOCOL 26 of the Lisbon Treaty on SGEI
- European Commission's SGEI Decision (2012/21/EU)

Exempt Member States from the obligation to notify compensation for social housing as long as this is **limited to *'disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups'***

This limitation **restricts the provision of social and affordable housing in certain communities and urban areas in Member States.**





# Sources of concern

## 1. State Aid

- decision of 2009 defines the target group as disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups
- high influence on social housing, e.g. in Netherlands

## 2. The Commission does not have a clear **provision on social housing in the SGEI framework**



**BUT**, European Parliament report (2013) mentions common elements:

- a mission of general interest;
- the objective of increasing the supply of affordable housing;
- the definition of target groups in terms of socio-economic status or the presence of vulnerabilities

# The Dutch case

## A brief timeline of events

1. **Appeal against the SGEI decision of 2009**
  2. General Court decides in 2011
  3. AEDES appeals again- reasoning admissible in 2014
  4. However, the General Court in May 2015 claims that “the appeal is manifestly unfounded”.
- ❑ In summer 2015 AEDE appealed again to raise awareness about the situation and would like the Court to give a definition and position on social housing. Housing Europe participated to the formulation of the position



**More info:** [www.housingeurope.eu/resource-487/european-court-objection-housing-associations-to-sgei-decision-manifestly-unfounded](http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-487/european-court-objection-housing-associations-to-sgei-decision-manifestly-unfounded)



# Why is a universal concept for social housing needed?



- a) It is fundamental to create the necessary flexibility on the ground to provide the best response possible to **growing and complex housing needs**.
- b) The **effects on the ground are important**
  - for example mixed urban regeneration, less sustainable business models with use of ERDF also depends on the capacity of authorities to use an adequate SGEI framework
- c) More efforts would improve the financial, environmental and social situation of citizens in line with **EU2020 objectives**.



# Recommendations to the European Commission (1/2)

- **Clarify the definition of social housing based on exchanges** of best practices and experience, taking into account the different national social housing schemes.
- Keep under **constant review** all systems of aid existing in Member States.
- **Maintain the current exemption** of social housing under the SGEI Decision.

# Recommendations to the European Commission (2/2)

- Provide guidance to **streamline the SGEI rules with social housing investments.**
- Use the **EU Urban Agenda** to work together with relevant actors to achieve better and more coherent European policies.
- Integrate social indicators in the case-by-case assessment of SGEI in the **country specific recommendations (CSRs)** issued within the EU Semester.

# Policy Demands

*The EU should ensure...*

- **a wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities** in providing and organising services of SGEI as closely as possible to the needs of the users;
- **diversity between various SGEI** and the **differences in the needs** of users;
- **a high level of quality, safety and affordability, equal treatment and the promotion of universal access** (Protocol 26).



**HOUSING  
EUROPE**

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 [@housingeurope](https://twitter.com/housingeurope)

 [HousingEurope](https://www.facebook.com/HousingEurope)

 [Housing Europe](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HousingEurope)