

Europe's Housing Crisis calls for a clear commitment to boost public investment from the EU and European Housing Ministers

*Contribution to the informal conference of EU Ministers responsible for Housing
March, 8th 2022, Nice*

On March 8th, Housing Ministers will gather. This meeting is a welcome initiative and marks the re-establishment of regular meetings of the Directors for Housing and Construction of EU Member States (Housing Focal Points) and Informal Ministerial Meetings on Housing.

While the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaims that “*access to social housing shall be provided for those in need*”, and the European Parliament promotes access for decent and affordable housing for all,¹ in reality for a growing number of citizens, including middle-income groups, accessing decent, affordable and adequate housing has become more difficult than ever.

All this could be different if the EU and all national governments commit to increasing support to supply affordable, social, cooperative and public housing. This is the key finding of the EU Urban Agenda action plan for affordable housing.² Already before COVID, the investment gap stood at a minimum of €57 billion yearly.

Any successful approach requires true cooperation between national, regional and local levels of governance as well as with cities, tenants and homeowners.

Other success factors for more effective affordable housing policies across the region have been identified by the UNECE in collaboration with Housing Europe and UN-Habitat in the #Housing2030 initiative.

Housing Europe, the International Union of Tenants (IUT), Eurocities, FEANTSA, Confrontations Europe, and CEMR have put together a 10-point plan to feed the Ministers' discussions.

10 point plan

Long-term investment in social, cooperative and public housing

1. Massive EU and national level investment in affordable, social, public and cooperative housing coupled with national-level regulatory measures to disincentivise the financialization of housing (such as setting up support mechanism for securing rent stabilisation and affordability). This can be enabled at the EU level through a review of the impact of the EU policy framework (incl. Stability and Growth Pact, European Semester, State aid rules, Green & Social taxonomy, EU transparency register on real estate transactions, Digital service act regulation). It will allow adaptation to the alarming housing reality that touches wide parts of the low to middle-income population, as well as respect Member

¹ [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2019/2187\(INI\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2019/2187(INI)&l=en)

² <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/housing/library/housing-partnership-final-action-plan>

States' discretionary power with regards housing. The revision of European state aid rules should be prioritized.

2. Increased information between Member States, the European Commission, European Investment Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank and national level intermediaries to facilitate access to finance & funding dedicated to affordable, social, public and cooperative housing. This can be supported by regular monitoring linked to the Housing Focal Points and the Informal Meetings of Ministers responsible for housing meetings for regular exchange.
3. Member States must increase the funding for housing and related social services (such as solidarity funds for tenants and/or targeted financial support measures like climate allowances for residents) for prevention & Housing First and integrated approaches initiatives in order to help combat homelessness and housing cost overburden in Europe;

A fair energy transition that makes green citizenship a reality for all

4. The Council and the European Parliament must adopt a Fit for 55 package (EED and EPBD) which takes into account local realities and local resources leading to fair and inclusive energy transition. Striking the right balance between renovating the building stock and ensuring affordability of housing is essential. The EU and Member States should deploy public funding to ensure that overall housing costs for tenants stay affordable³ after the renovation of rented housing units, in line with the action plan of the EU UA partnership for affordable housing
5. The European Commission to promote district approach in renovation of affordable, social, public and cooperative housing in co-decision with residents and in line with the Affordable Housing Initiative. Funding for skills and capacity building around European renovation competence centres must be increased.
6. The European Commission must promote innovative ways to procure for renovation or new construction possible under the existing EU framework, taking into account circular principles and investing in building the capacity of relevant stakeholders.
7. Revenue generated by the EU Emissions Trading System to be invested in climate mitigation and adaptation to be channelled to the demand and supply side of the housing sector so as to avoid the lowest income groups bearing the burden.

Inclusive and attractive Next-Generation neighbourhoods

8. The New European Bauhaus must incorporate a specific workstream on the housing affordability crisis and co-design for the residents in order to create and advance liveable neighbourhoods and promote the common good.
9. The Member States and the European Commission should support the mapping and improvement of services to promote active inclusion and integrated services approach, prevent housing exclusion, housing costs overburden and homelessness (including within the European Platform on Combating Homelessness) and promote inclusion of vulnerable groups;

³ EU UA partnership for affordable housing action plan
https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/final_action_plan_euua_housing_partnership_december_2018_1.pdf

10. The Member States and the European Commission in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity must support local stakeholders and decision-makers in order to accelerate the transition towards an inclusive post-carbon society and provide the necessary services to deliver affordability and high quality of life.

Today, we call for dedication to end unacceptable levels of rising housing exclusion, housing cost overburden and homelessness to make access to decent and affordable housing a reality for all.

Support our 10-point plan



#HousingEU2022FR #PFUE2022

Housing Europe is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing. Since 1988 it's a network of 46 national & regional federations gathering 43.000 housing providers in 25 countries. Together they manage around 25 million homes, about 11% of existing dwellings in Europe.

Eurocities is the network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people, working together to ensure a good quality of life for all.

The International Union of Tenants (IUT) is a non-governmental and not-for-profit membership organisation for global tenants' organisations. IUT was founded in 1926 in Zürich, Switzerland. Since 1956 our head office is in Stockholm, Sweden with a representative office in Brussels since 2008. It has 72 member organisations in 47 countries, and are financed through membership fees.

FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. Established in 1989, FEANTSA brings together non-profit services that support homeless people in Europe. They have over 120 member organisations from 30 countries, including 27 Member States.

Confrontations Europe is a non-partisan think tank created in 1992. Its purpose is to develop concrete proposals that help to build a human, competitive and united Europe. Its method is to bring together European economic and social players to work together on proposals aimed at boosting economic and social development within the European Union.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the oldest and broadest European association of local and regional governments. They are the only organisation that brings together the national associations of local and regional governments from 40 European countries and represents, through them, all levels of territories – local, intermediate and regional.