



EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership

Information for EU-institutions, cities,
stakeholders, interest groups and NGOs

State of Play as at 24 March 2017

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

“ *In order to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the rules laid down by Community law and national laws and practices.* ”

Article 34 (3)

Members

Member States: Slovakia (coordinator), Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovenia + 2 observers (Czech Republic and Sweden)

Cities/City Networks: Vienna (AT, coordinator), Lisbon (PT), Poznan (PL), Riga (LV), Scottish Cities Alliance (UK), Eurocities

Stakeholders: AEDES, Housing Europe, International Union of Tenants (IUT)

EU- Institutions: DG REGIO, DG ENER, DG EMPL, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Experts: Faculty for Urban Studies Science Po, Paris on behalf of DG REGIO, URBACT

A broad variety of realities and experiences

„The deliveries of the Housing Partnership are the result of the joint work of cities, Member States, EU institutions, users’ and consumers’, providers’ and producers’ organisations on European scale. They reflect the diversity of realities of housing systems throughout the EU.“

Housing, an issue of Member States

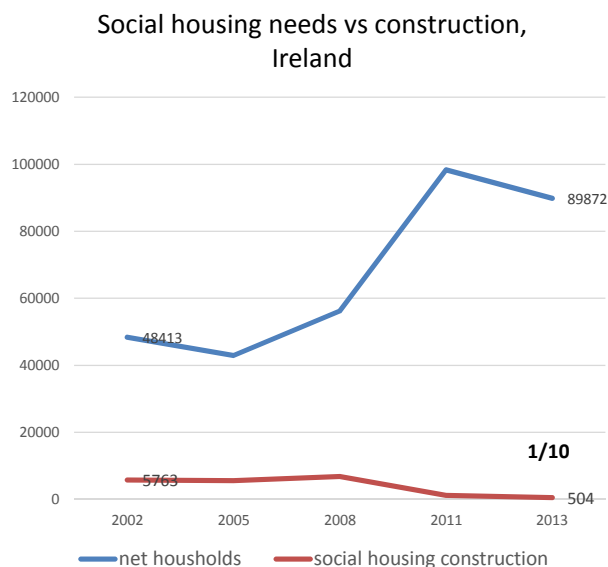
- Social Housing as a service of General Economic Interest (SGEI) is to be defined at national, regional and local level.
- The principle of subsidiarity applies for effective housing policies according to the needs of the citizens.
- Social housing does vary substantially from one Member State to another, from one city to another.
- Affordable, sustainable housing needs long-term investments both in construction and maintenance.

Challenges for the cities of Europe

- Job creation, sustaining/regaining social cohesion
- Combatting poverty, homelessness and segregation
- Ongoing demographic change and growing cities
- Lack of affordable housing (market failures)
- Climate change, need for more energy efficiency
- Dramatic decline of public investments at local level
- Loss of confidence in politics and democracy

Lack of affordable housing

- New affordable/social housing production has decreased between 2009 and 2012
- ...but number of households on waiting lists keeps increasing:
 - BE 140,000 to 186,000
 - FR 1.2 to 1.7 million
 - IT 600,000 to 650,000



Affordability gap

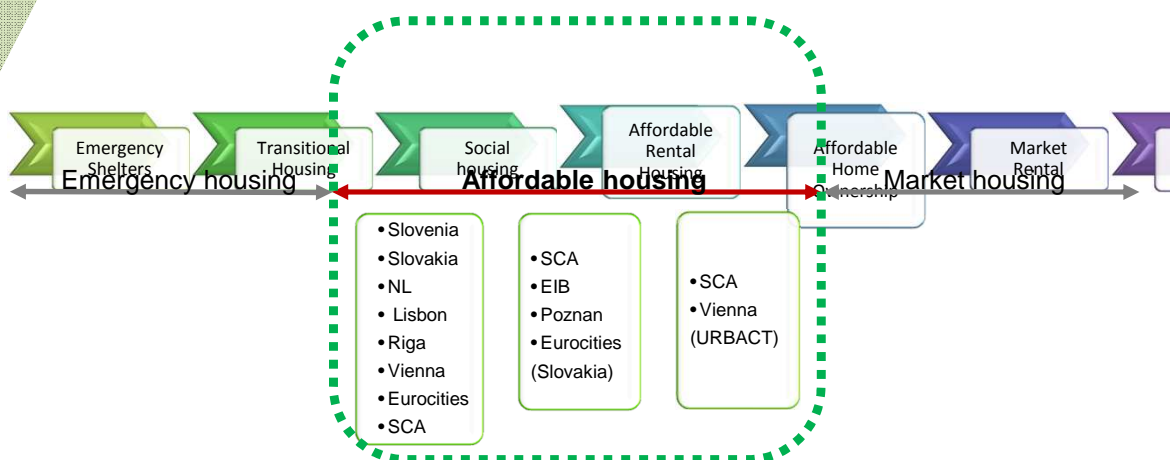
- 81.5 million Europeans 'overburdened' by housing costs (highest in EL, NL, DK, DE)
- Housing costs a much heavier burden for the poor (41% compared to 22%)
- Increasingly difficult for those who enter the housing market (this is also a generational issue: 48% of young adults live with their parents)

The EU and housing policy

- EP, CoR and EESC have produced several reports and opinions on housing, energy poverty and urban policies.
- Cities and their European networks adopted positions on urban housing policies on EU-level like the “30 Mayors”.
- European Consumer (IUT) and producer (Housing Europe) side constantly address the issue of affordable housing in Europe and organise joint activities like the European Responsible Housing Awards.
- The EIB, EFSI and other EU-funds need better alignment to cities’ needs for affordable housing.

Housing Continuum

In theory all tenures can be affordable or unaffordable. The question is:
Is support available where it is needed, which tenures are eligible to it and where?



Population of tenure associations in the partnership.

Key questions

1. What is the overall contribution of housing policies to make cities places where all citizens can live, learn, work, access opportunities equally?
2. How can cities maintain social cohesion and decrease inequality through a broad affordable housing stock?
3. How can cities address affordability and security for tenants and small home owners, including protection from speculation and expulsion?

Key questions

4. What financial instruments and legal conditions do cities need for their housing policies on EU level and to boost long term investment in affordable housing with adequate recognition of their social and environmental returns?
5. What kind of new governance is needed in the EU to better insert cities' expertise in the overall EU-decision-making process?



Members of the Housing Partnership at the Vienna-Meeting, Dec. 2016

Activities 2015 to 2017



1. Creating the partnership: identifying expectations, building confidence, defining working methods and meeting formats
2. Setting-up coordinators team (Slovakia, Vienna)
3. Stocktaking of EU-policies and research on EU-level, creation of common knowledge base
4. Brainstorming on possible issues to tackle and identification of priority issues
5. Establishment of 3 sub-groups to work on specific issues: state aid, finance & funding, general housing policy

Activities 2015 to 2017

5. Commissioning of two research papers on innovative finance models
6. Adoption of a Guidance Paper on EU regulations on public support for housing
7. Elaboration of a toolkit on affordable housing policies
8. Constant information of different EU-institutions, cities, city networks, single interest groups, NGOs, etc.
9. Liaison with other partnerships on common issues, e.g. migration/integration, urban poverty, ...

Meetings

2015-2016

- December 2015, Geneva
- February 2016, Brussels
- March 2016, Prague
- July 2016, Bratislava
- September 2016, Geneva
- December 2016, Vienna

2017

- March 2017, Brussels
- June 2017, Amsterdam
- September 2017, Glasgow
- November 2017, Geneva

Strands of work & outlook on actions

- *Better regulation:*
 - Guidance on state aid and social housing to improve legal certainty and clarity for public and private investors
- *Better funding:*
 - Identification and sharing of good practice on innovative financial models in Western and Eastern European MS
- *Better knowledge:*
 - Elaboration of an Affordable Housing Policy Toolkit

Working groups

Working group theme	Topics covered	Lead Partners
State aid	State aid, competition law, definition of social housing in SGEI decision, VAT	Vienna
Finance and funding	Investments and instruments, loans, “golden rule”, European semester, innovative funding	Scottish Cities Alliance
General Housing Policy	Part #1: Land use, building ground, spatial planning, renovation, energy efficiency, anti-speculation Part #2: security of tenure, co-management, co-design, rent stabilisation, support for vulnerable groups	Housing Europe (Part #1) International Union of Tenants (Part #2)

Coordinator Slovakia



Elena Szolgayova

Chair of the UNECE Committee on Housing & Land Management, Director General, DG Housing Policy & Urban Development, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, Slovakia

“We do see that a lot of European cities must meet a growing need for affordable and sustainable housing, and identify the appropriate legal and financial framework to realise this. An important aspect in the partnership is the exchange of knowledge about affordable housing, not only in the individual perspective, but also in a holistic view – a good social mix with affordable housing for all is a precondition for stable growth conditions.”

Coordinator City of Vienna



Michaela Kauer

Director of the Brussels Liaison Office of the City of Vienna - Department for European Affairs, Member of the Executive Committee of Eurocities and Assistant of Vienna's Member in the Committee of Regions.

“In Vienna, around 60 percent of the 1,8 million citizens live in municipal, cooperative or publicly funded housing. The high life quality is mainly based on our social responsible housing policy ensuring social mix since nearly 100 years now. As many other cities, we face rapid population growth and need better conditions on EU-level to organize and finance these long-term investments for the future.”

Mission Statement

*“We have a vision of Europe which provides **affordable housing to all its citizens and cares for inclusive and sustainable communities**, where everyone is enabled to reach her and his full potential.”*

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