

“Affordable housing, a challenge for European cities and metropolis”

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The situation of affordable and decent housing is getting worse in the EU

The availability and accessibility of decent housing is becoming a more and more pre-eminent socio-economic preoccupation for the EU citizens.

This phenomenon has accelerated in the last years, as housing prices in the European cities and metropolis have increased more quickly than wages.

In the European Union, households fear today that they might not be able to find decent housing or afford it. Young people and newcomers in big cities are particularly concerned.

Affordable and decent housing: a fundamental condition for the economic and social cohesion of European Union

Besides the advances obtained within the framework of the New urban agenda (Habitat III), the access to adequate, affordable and safe housing by 2030 constitutes the main target of SDG 11 “Sustainable cities and communities”. The “Make the shift” campaign driven by the UN Special Rapporteur considers the full realisation of the right for housing as a fundamental right. This is also the subject of the declaration “Cities for Adequate Housing” approved in July 2018 by a worldwide coalition of local governments under the auspices of the UCLG and the “Policy statement” of EURO CITIES workgroup in the framework of the housing partnership of European commission urban agenda.

Housing is at the heart of the growing economic divides in the European Union according to a report from the World Bank, a major cause of the erosion of its economic, social and territorial cohesion.

A break of long term investments in social infrastructures.

Housing is hardly accessible in the metropolitan centres because the building of new dwellings, particularly affordable dwellings, has not progressed as fast as demand, partly because of the budget constraints inherent in the economic governance of the European Union.

The acceleration of the lack of accommodation and the rise of housing prices in many European cities indicate that the markets do malfunction and that a public permanent regulatory intervention is now more needed than ever.

The European Union must ensure the respect of the Treaty goals in terms of economic and social cohesion, the fundamental rights and in particular the right to access social housing for the needing European households.

The credibility of the European Union with its citizens is at stake.

That is why, in the context of the coming European elections next May, we call for making affordable housing a major subject of the campaign and we want to place for debate an action plan, consisting particularly in:

1. **Supporting the European cities and metropolis and their networks in their exchanges on the local housing politics and the good practices in terms of regulation of the markets** within the framework of the EU urban agenda and its housing partnership, which should be reinforced in the next mandate;
2. **Sustaining the investment in social infrastructures by the creation of a European investments platform dedicated to affordable housing** within the framework of the future 2021-2027 cohesion politics, the strategical investments plan InvestEU ("Juncker 2") and the engagement of the Bank of the Union (European Investments Bank) ;
3. **Setting up a monitoring of partnership nature of the local housing markets within the framework of the European Semester and weight the long term investments in the social infrastructures**, in particular in the social dwellings, in the computation of the budget deficit of the Member states ;
4. **Guarantying an effective implementation of the housing section of the set of European social rights**, in particular the right to access to social dwellings and to an assistance for quality housing for the households which needs are not fulfilled spontaneously by the local housing markets ;
5. **Consolidating the European legal framework applicable to housing** and in particular securing the regimes of the State assistance to social housing SGEI and low VAT rates, while guarantying full competency to the Member states to define the mandate of social housing ;
6. **Organizing every year a "European housing summit"** gathering all the stakeholders of the implementation and the reporting of these measures.