

Affordable Housing in 21st Century

Strategic Planning for Affordable and Sustainable Housing in Cities

Introduction

Housing is a basic human right. It has a profound impact on the quality of life, wellbeing, health, environment, mobility and society as a whole. Policy-makers at all levels acknowledge growing social and economic inequalities in cities, rapidly increasing social, environmental and financial costs. Addressing such issues as urban sprawl, fuel poverty, low quality of housing, gated communities, slums, homelessness and empty homes, and finally access to decent quality, affordable housing, have become particularly important policy objectives over last decades.

Well-planned housing solutions are a prerequisite for cities and other human settlements to become socially, ecologically and economically sustainable and culturally adequate. According to the Habitat III Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region (2016), there are multiple challenges to planning the provision of affordable decent housing. Several countries in the UNECE region have moved from a centrally planned to a market driven economy over the last 30 years. Old industrial and monofunctional cities in the region faced great challenges during this transition.

Housing and related urban infrastructure in the region built mostly in 1950-70s requires massive reconstruction while financing is limited. The global financial crisis that started in 2008 has also led to more inequality in the region and has further limited the possibilities of financing housing construction. Lack of affordable housing, especially for vulnerable groups, is a critical matter, leading to problems of accessibility to urban infrastructure, and increased spatial segregation in cities.

There is a need for innovative approaches through better and more strategic planning, innovative financing, stronger involvement of local authorities, more effective cross-sectoral cooperation and cooperation between national and local authorities. Only through such cooperation it is possible to rebuild the housing and infrastructure in the region and integrate planning of housing in the strategic territorial planning.

Today, there are great opportunities for renewing the housing stock and making it more affordable as there is a shift to cleaner, greener manufacturing that has smaller spatial demands in cities. Moreover, the rise of the knowledge economy, built on a digital revolution, is bringing about massive opportunities and challenges for cities and human settlements.

Conference scope and objective

The conference ‘Affordable Housing in 21st Century: Strategic Planning for Affordable and Sustainable Housing in Cities’ is organized in response to the decision of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management to organize “a series of international conferences and workshops to discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing in the ECE region, including in Sofia, Bulgaria; Prague, Czech Republic; Milano, Italy; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Glasgow, the UK.” (ECE/HBP/190 paragraph 20).

The conference is aimed at strengthening evidence-based policy-making on sustainable urban development with a focus on housing in relation to ‘housing affordability’ and with a view of improving the review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Czech Republic.

The conference will discuss key elements related to strategic planning for/of sustainable and affordable housing at national, local and regional levels. The discussion will address the following questions:

- What are key approaches to affordable housing stemming from urban and housing policy and research, especially in relation to the distinction between 'housing affordability' and 'affordable housing'?
- What is the role of strategic planning/policy in securing access to affordable housing and improving housing affordability?
 - How are these objectives included into strategic planning policies at national, regional and local levels?
 - How can spatial planning/policy instruments be used to improve housing affordability and access to affordable housing, especially with regard to the role of local and regional strategic urban plans?
- How to better plan for affordable housing and improving housing affordability now and in the future?
 - How to ensure that all the aspects of the physical planning, economic feasibility, environmental sustainability and social cohesion are considered when planning for affordable housing?

The conference will also address the relationships between the availability and accessibility of housing, the economic competitiveness of municipalities and regions, economic and social sustainability of local policies and the quality of life local and regional authorities offer through the provision of affordable housing. The conference will include presentations and discussions on strategic planning of affordable and sustainable housing from countries in the UNECE Region, with a focus on the Czech Republic.

Conference organizers

The Faculty of Architecture and Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies of the Czech Technical University in Prague in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Conference Coordinator

Prof. Michal Kohout, Head of Department of Building Theory, Faculty of Architecture, Czech Technical University, Prague.

Conference target group

Politicians and representatives of public administrations at the central as well as regional and local levels, representatives of professional organizations, housing market players, academia, experts and other stakeholders.

Conference format

A two-day conference for approximately 150-200 participants. On the first day, the event will feature three thematic sessions, with opening presentations followed by a panel discussion. The second day will consist of three thematic sessions to be organised in parallel. Selected presentations will be published as papers in the conference proceedings.

Speakers

Policy-makers at the central, regional and local levels, scholars, architects, planners, economists and other experts from the Czech Republic and countries in the UNECE Region.

Venue

Czech Technical University, Prague

Languages



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English and Czech with simultaneous translation

Draft Conference Programme

Friday, 21 June 2019

Moderator: Michaela Hergetová

09:30 - 10:00 Registration of participants

10:00 - 10:15 Welcome

- Representative of the Faculty of Architecture, Czech Technical University, Prague
- Representative of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic
- Ms. Elena Szolgayova, Director General, DG Housing Policy and Urban Development, Ministry of Transport and Construction; and Chair of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, Slovakia (tbc)

10:15 - 10:25 Introduction into the conference objectives, questions to be addressed and format

Prof. Michal Kohout, Faculty of Architecture, CTU Prague

Dr. Petr Štěpánek, Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, CTU Prague

10:25 – 11:00 Keynote speech – Spiro Pollali, Harvard - TBC

11:00 – 12:00 Session 1. Affordability versus Sustainability - Approaches to ‘affordable housing’ in urban policies and housing research – main debates and recent developments.

Objective: to explore the variety of approaches in planning for affordable housing in planning and housing research, especially in relation to the distinction between housing affordability and affordable housing.

Format: 3 presentations of max. 10 mins followed by questions from the audience and a discussion at the end of the presentations.

Presentations focus on definitions of ‘housing affordability’ and ‘affordable housing’ based on concrete examples.

Panel presenters

- **Ms. Alice Pittini**, Housing Europe Federation, Brussels (tbc)
- Prof. Luděk Sýkora, Charles University Prague
- Dr. Tomáš Hudeček Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, CTU

Question and answers, discussion

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch

13:00 - 14:00 Session 2. Good practices in the UNECE Region - Approaches to 'affordable housing' provision in spatial planning policy.

Objective: to discuss policy instruments currently used to improve housing affordability and the provision of affordable housing in countries in the UNECE region.

Format: 5 presentations of max. 7 mins followed by questions from the audience and a discussion at the end of the presentations.

Presentations will focus on policy context and institutional arrangements for strategic planning of housing

Speakers:

- **Representative City of Vienna**
- Miroslav Šik, professor, Academy of Art, Prague (tbc)
- **Dr. Will Usher**, Oxford University (presentation on NISMOD2 model) (tbc)
- **Ms. Agata Krause**, UNECE expert on urban development and housing
- Adam Zábranský, Representative of City Council of Prague

Question and answers, discussion.

14:00 - 14:30 Coffee break

14:30 - 15:45 Roundtable 'Enabling better production and use of research evidence in policy-making for sustainable housing and urban development'

Objective: to discuss ways in which scientific research and evidence on provision of affordable housing and housing affordability is used in policy making and discussed how to further support evidence-based decision-making.

Format: 4 presentations of max. 5 mins followed by questions from the audience and a discussion at the end of the presentations.

An interactive discussion with interventions of max 5 minutes based on predefined questions.

- Representative of the Government Office of the Czech Republic - tbc
- Petr Zahradník, Representative of EECE
- Ondřej Boháč, Director of Prague planning Institut
- Dr. Martin Lux, Academy of Science of the Czech Republic
- Dr. David Tichý, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, CTU Prague
- Representative of JRD Development - tbc

Question and answers, discussion.

15:45 - 16:00 Summary of the discussion and conclusions



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Saturday, 22 June 2019

10:00 - 12:30 Parallel sessions

Session 1. Housing Estates, what's next?

Housing estates in many countries in the UNECE Region, including in the Czech Republic, were built as centrally-planned, centrally-built, centrally-owned and centrally-administered facilities. One of the consequences of the privatization process carried out in the former Eastern bloc is the atomized nature of ownership in the housing estates. The current property rights situation therefore goes against the very initial concept of the housing estates which are places for communal life. The event will introduce and discuss the results of a 3-year research programme launched at the Czech Technical University dealing with the challenges of transforming the housing estates in the Czech Republic.

Session 2. Smart sustainable housing

The session will focus on the concept of smart housing in smart cities and will address issues of economic feasibility, environmental and social sustainability of the application of smart technological solutions at a building level. The session will also discuss the relationship between smartness of the housing and its affordability and planning smart affordable housing as part of smart cities.

Session 3. Interdisciplinary aspects of housing

Housing is a complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon; yet, very often strategic urban plans are prepared by sectoral agencies or ministries focusing only on social aspects of housing. This session will discuss the inter-relationships between housing and other topics, such as demography, environment and climate change, transport and technology, history and identity, and others. Participants will focus on how housing should be reflected in a comprehensive way in urban plans.

Conference preparatory committee:

Prof. Michal Kohout	Faculty of Architecture, CTU
David Tichý, PhD.	Faculty of Architecture, CTU
Petr Štěpánek, Ph.D.	Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, CTU
Lucia Dobrucká, Ph.D.	Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, CTU
Daniela Špirková, Ph.D.	Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, CTU
Daniela Grabmüllerová, Ph.D.	Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic
Magdaléna Ovesen	Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic
Gulnara Roll, Ph.D.	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe