



VITAL SPACES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNECE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKING PARTY ON LAND ADMINISTRATION

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TOWARDS A UNECE-WIDE POLICY FRAMEWORK ON AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY AND ECOLOGICAL HOUSING

Urban areas in the UNECE region are increasingly facing challenges of ensuring access to affordable housing and improving energy efficiency and environmental soundness of dwellings. Housing shortages are experienced in many countries in the region; carbon footprints from dwellings remain too high, with buildings being responsible for over a third of total final energy consumption; and homes are often unhealthy environment to live in. These challenges are amplified by other severe problems faced by the world, in particular climate change and limited energy supplies. Such problems, if not properly addressed, endanger social cohesion and have a potential negative impact on economic productivity, political stability and the sustainability of our environment. They also require much more coordination between the sovereign states, than we have it today.

Meeting in Geneva for its seventy-first session (20–21 September 2010), the Committee on Housing and Land Management discussed the document “Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing” and decided to set up a Working Group to explore possible options for a legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region. As outlined in this document, a UNECE-wide policy framework could increase the legitimacy and visibility of the housing sector as a key component of a country’s sustainable development.

To provide guidance for attaining the goals of ecological housing, member States also adopted an “Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region”. Achieving the goals of ecological housing is impossible without developing better standards for energy performance of dwellings and improving energy efficiency governance and financial infrastructure. The Action Plan outlines

policy areas for action and contains a range of targets and measures that member States can adapt and implement right now with a view to removing barriers to energy efficiency and moving towards a low-energy and carbon-neutral housing sector.

Urban areas are not only the main contributor to climate change; they are also themselves vulnerable to its adverse effects. Therefore, reducing CO2 emissions in cities and helping them to become more resilient to climatic challenges should be an integral part of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. A study on “Climate Neutral Cities” to be prepared by the end of 2010 will promote an integrated cross-sectoral approach to urban development that includes housing, land use management, energy efficiency, transportation, waste management and green areas. The discussion of the outline of this study showcased a number of advanced planning strategies and urban management practices focused on achieving the goals of low-energy, low-carbon and highly resilient cities.



Seventy-first session of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management.

The Committee also decided to undertake a country profile on the housing sector of Ukraine, which would include land administration issues.

For more information on the seventy-first session of the CHLM, please see: <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/unece/hlm71/>

The official report of the session will be released shortly, and will be available on the UNECE website.

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Access for all, universal design — what does it mean?

ALL PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE AND CAPACITIES, by Jakob Krupka

In Europe and beyond, many cities are far from being fully accessible to various groups of disabled people, which leads to their direct exclusion from fundamental services such as employment, education and health care. It is estimated that, by 2020, half of Europe's population will be over 50 years old. The 85-plus age group is the fastest growing segment of the population, which means rates of disability will increase.



Housing experts in the UNECE region are discussing preventive solutions that could adapt spatial planning and housing policies to allow for the increasing percentage of elderly populations which are more vulnerable to disabilities. Several innovations have been applied to the design of cities, public transport and commercial and residential buildings that incorporate the concepts of access for all or universal design. The idea behind these concepts is to ensure that the built environment becomes accessible for all groups of the population. Flexible, intuitive, safe, accessible and appealing surroundings form the roots of universal design. Larger elevators and bathrooms, ramps (as alternatives to stairs) and corridors with special floor indicators (for those with reduced sight) are only a few examples of good practice to promote a barrier-free living environment.

It has to be stressed that not only architects and urban planners play a key role in spreading these new ideas; the political will of authorities and the awareness of the general public are of significant value to further implement and enforce norms and standards that can lead to a more inclusive built environment. Recent political discussions have often addressed the underrepresentation of disabled people in the labour force (due to diminished working opportunities), as well as their limited access to general services. But aren't these problems related in part to the physical design of the environment? In many cases, I believe they are. Physical access to public spaces and buildings is fundamental to achieving equal opportunities for people on all levels.



Mr. JAKOB KRUPKA IS A CAPACITY-BUILDING OFFICER AT THE UNECE HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION.

Experts also agree that several obstacles to developing a barrier-free urban environment still remain, including limited financial incentives for developers, lack of mandatory building standards, lack of adequate technical knowledge and bureaucratic resistance to change. Some Governments have advanced more than others in approving progressive legislation that allows for an increased allocation of resources for universal design projects. As an example, all new residential buildings in Norway erected after 1 July 2010 must have at least one bathroom and one bedroom accessible to wheelchair users.

However, more public discussion is still needed to raise consciousness on the benefits and possible consequences of universal design. For instance, developers have forecasted higher construction costs for such structures, which lead to higher purchase costs for new flats that could result to exclusion of financially vulnerable groups. Some consider this as universal design working against its own purpose, while others see it as a transition period in the process of urban upgrading. In fact, the return rates of investments in universal access can only be measured in the long run and the allocation of public monies to promote these innovations should also stem from fairness considerations. Taking into account the rapid urban growth and lack of apartments in many urban agglomerations around the globe, the thought of all new residential buildings being accessible by wheelchair users should be inspirational.

A TOOL AND AN APPROACH FOR SETTING SUSTAINABLE ENERGY RETROFITTING STRATEGIES FOR TERRITORIES (NEIGHBOURHOOD, CITY...) OR BUILDING STOCKS

By Catherine CHARLOT-VALDIEU of SUDEN (Sustainable Urban development European Network), a non profit association for the promotion of sustainable urban development (ccv@wanadoo.fr) and Philippe OUTREQUIN of La Calade (Outrequin.philippe@gmail.com)

Energy retrofitting of buildings is one of the challenges in each country or city but it is complicated and expensive, especially with

the world financial crisis. The only way to succeed is to set up sustainable strategies at territorial scales and/or for building stocks.

Table: Summary of the results for all the scenarios

Over all analysis (with all the techniques needed for reaching the various scenarios)	Cep Energy consump. Kwh/m2	Cost for the social owner (€/m2.year)	Charges (€/m2 per year)	Life cycle cost (€/m2 per year)	Investment/ Dwelling (€)	Scenario	Energy label	Climate label
Initial situation	244,67		21,50	21,50			E	F
Heating system balance	223,08	0,35	19,73	20,07	272		D	F
Energy saving due to hot water saving	211,18	0,51	18,05	18,55	340		D	F
External walls insulation - 10 cm	155,04	3,76	13,64	17,40	4 636	Eco-prêt	D	E
Pipes insulation	149,98	3,83	13,20	17,03	4 704	Grenelle	C	D
Central gas heating with condensation	130,40	6,40	8,93	15,32	7 541	Optimum	C	D
Changes in behaviours	125,97	7,09	8,62	15,71	7 677		C	D
Solar heat water	107,25	8,89	8,22	17,11	9 719		C	D
Hygro ventilation type B	95,93	10,00	8,25	18,25	10 629	BBC	C	D
Roof insulation	88,04	12,04	7,70	19,74	12 884		B	C

These simulations (scenarios) also help in identifying the buildings to be demolished and those in which an important energy retrofitting programme is needed.

In the table above, the 4 scenarios require different investment cost per dwelling ranging from 4'636 € - 12'884 €. The optimum scenario is reached on a 7'541 € investment/dwelling.

The SEC model, focused on a life cycle energy cost (LCEC) analysis, is a decision aid tool:

- **for local authorities** for dealing with private housing in sustainable energy retrofitting strategies, in coherence with their regulation documents regarding housing and land planning.
- **for social owners** for setting up the energy retrofitting strategy of their whole building stock,
- **for all the actors** involved in a neighbourhood regeneration project including retrofitting of existing buildings;
- for local authorities in their **fight against energy poverty**.

The SEC model **contributes to the dialogue between actors concerned** (such as local authorities and social owners and especially, financial institutions such as banks).

Such a life cycle energy cost analysis has already shown that:

- **the most efficient techniques are different for each building:** technical specificities and the same technologies must not be adapted on all the buildings
- **the energy retrofitting costs are sometimes very different according to:**

- the energy source,
- the building typology,
- the initial level of energy consumption,
- the scenario (the objectives and the manner by which these objectives could be reached).

Such a strategy can be set up in each European country or city and same model that is working for Italy and France up to now could be adapted.

For more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us or visit our web site: www.suden.org.

UNECE HELPS FOSTER A SUSTAINABLE REAL ESTATE MARKET IN UKRAINE // ЕЖ ООН способствует развитию устойчивых рынков недвижимости в Украине

The recent sub-prime mortgage crisis and the collapse of the global housing bubble damaged financial institutions globally and sparked the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. As part of UNECE efforts to avert future crises and to promote sustainable development in the region, a round table on sustainable real estate markets was held in Kiev, Ukraine, on 18 June 2010, organized by UNECE in cooperation with the Ukrainian Chapter of the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI Ukraine) and the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group.

The Round Table, "Towards Sustainable Real Estate Markets in Ukraine", launched the UNECE *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets* in Ukraine and discussed the main principles and guidance provided in the study. Government officials, representatives of professional associations and the private sector, as well as international experts participated in the Round Table, exchanging views on the current situation in the real estate sector of Ukraine and discussing how to adapt the principles and guidance of the *Policy Framework* to Ukraine's particular institutional context.



The conclusions of the Round Table provided guidance to a working group, established as a follow up to this event, to work with the Government of Ukraine on the development of specific policy reforms in Ukraine's real estate sector.

The recent financial and economic crisis highlighted the urgent need for UNECE to provide guidance and promote sound real estate markets in its region. Moreover, a fully functioning real estate sector, based on transparent real estate and financial markets, could be a driving force for development and produce economic, social and environmental benefits for UNECE member States. To address these issues, the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group developed the *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets*, which offers guidance for policy action aimed at building a sustainable real estate sector in countries of the UNECE region.

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// ЕЭК ООН способствует развитию устойчивых рынков недвижимости в Украине

Недавний кризис субстандартного ипотечного кредитования нанес ущерб финансовым институтам в мировом масштабе и вызвал тяжелейший финансовый и экономический кризис со времен Великой депрессии. В рамках работы ЕЭК ООН по предотвращению подобных кризисов в будущем и по содействию устойчивому развитию в регионе, 18 июня 2010 в Киеве (Украина) в сотрудничестве с Украинским отделением Международной Федерации Недвижимости и Консультативной группой по рынку недвижимости ЕЭК ООН был организован

круглый стол "На пути к устойчивым рынкам недвижимости в Украине".

Во время круглого стола состоялась презентация публикации ЕЭК ООН «*Основы политики для устойчивых рынков недвижимости*» и обсуждение основных принципов и рекомендаций, содержащихся в данном исследовании. Правительственные чиновники, представители профессиональных объединений и частного сектора, а также международные эксперты, которые приняли участие в работе круглого стола, обменялись мнениями о текущей ситуации в секторе недвижимости Украины и обсудили, каким образом адаптировать принципы и руководящие указания *Основы политики* к институциональному контексту Украины.

Заключения круглого стола стали руководством для рабочей группы, созданной по итогам данного мероприятия для работы совместно с правительством Украины по разработке конкретных реформ сектора недвижимости в Украине.

Недавний финансовый и экономический кризис подчеркнул настоятельную необходимость ЕЭК ООН обеспечить руководство и содействовать развитию эффективных рынков недвижимости в регионе. Кроме того, полноценно функционирующий сектор недвижимости, основанный на прозрачности рынков финансов и недвижимости, мог бы стать движущей силой для развития и принести экономические, социальные и экологические выгоды для стран-членов ЕЭК ООН. Для исследования данных вопросов, Консультативная группа по рынку недвижимости ЕЭК ООН разработала «*Основы политики для устойчивых рынков недвижимости*», которые представляют собой руководство для принятия политических мер, направленных на создание устойчивого сектора недвижимости в странах региона ЕЭК ООН.

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INTERVIEW ON TRENDS IN LAND ADMINISTRATION – Efficiency, reliability and reduced costs for customers

The interview was a follow up to the UNECE workshop on "Efficient and Transparent Land Management in ECE countries" organized by the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration and hosted by the State Committee on Property Issues of Azerbaijan. Ariel Ivanier (Secretary to the Working Party on Land Administration) spoke to Impact, an official publication of American Chamber of Commerce in Azerbaijan, about current challenges to land administration authorities in Azerbaijan and other CIS countries.

The full interview can be read in the ninth issue of **Impact Azerbaijan** (Spring 2010), pp. 12-13. It can be accessed through their website at <http://www.amchamaz.org/downloads.aspx?category=10&namespace=newsletter>.

WHAT'S NEW:

AT THE SECRETARIAT: A FAREWELL MESSAGE



CHRISTINA VON SCHWEINICHEN

It has been more than 18 years that I worked in the ECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and I never felt that I was doing the same job. This is due to the fact that along the years countries needs and performance changed as well as their political setting and priorities. I came to the ECE just after the “fall of the wall” when the ECE had to adapt itself to the new needs of the countries and be able to respond promptly to their demands. I remember very well how proud we were that a new form of meeting was “invented”, i.e., workshops. These became a more flexible way to

gather countries' experts, to discuss issues that needed prompt action rather than having meetings which needed a long standing preparation of years. This was unheard of in the UN as meetings and the setting was rather formal at that time.

I have very good memories of such workshops as they were more interesting, very topical and less political. The Committee organized several of these workshops and it still does. Working on the housing programme allowed me to get acquainted with the real problems countries were facing. The interesting side of it was that, year after year one could also see progress achieved. This was also thanks to the dedication of some professionals in the Ministries, who were working very hard to get things done. Many times in some of the countries housing was not a priority; never the less thanks to these professionals things changed and progress became visible.

Through the housing country profile exercise, which reviewed several countries' in transition housing policies we became familiar with a country's legislation, institutional setting, financial means and with the way housing was privatized (and its consequences) as well as the situation of the existing housing stock and its management. To get all this wealth of information we were meeting with Ministers, heads of departments, local authorities, experts, NGOs, associations and private sector representatives to receive as much information as possible including data. Site visits were also included to see what it was all about and what needed to be done to overcome some of the problems. I realized every time I was in a country under review, how lucky I was to be able to become acquainted with the people and the enormous responsibility they had in making the changes that were needed. We were always so well received, with such generosity and eagerness to make the changes needed. We were aware of the responsibility we had in putting forward recommendations through the international experts as they needed to be realistic, not too ambitious and concrete enough to enable the country to put the right policies in place. Listening to the Committee's sessions I was always impressed to hear how much countries had done and the results achieved. In fact in these last 18 years it is amazing the changes that have occurred, and this is visible even in this short period of time. I will miss the fact that I will not be able to use this privileged observatory anymore to get acquainted with the specificities of countries, meet extraordinary people professionally, but able to always give a personal touch that makes the relationship easier and friendlier.

I would like to say goodbye to all of you that have received us in such an extraordinary way in your countries, and that have believed

all along the years that they could make the difference in working so hard, thinking that “YES they CAN”.

AT THE SECRETARIAT: OUR NEW INTERN



Nina Peeva comes from Bulgaria and she joined UNECE as an intern on the 1st of July 2010. She is assisting in the activities for the Country Profile studies and upcoming workshops and assisted in the preparation of the recently-concluded 71st Session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management. Previous to this internship, she worked as a trainee at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nina has just obtained a Master's degree of International Economic Law from the Sorbonne Law School. She speaks English, French, Italian and Bulgarian and has some knowledge of Spanish and Russian. She is interested in different cultures and languages and would like to work in a multicultural international environment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

UNECE WORKSHOP ON SPATIAL PLANNING TO IMPROVE SECURITY OF TENURE IN THE UNECE REGION

To better understand the role of spatial planning and the responsibilities of land administration authorities to reduce the spread of informal settlements in the UNECE region, the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration, in consultation with the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management and with cooperation of the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre of Turkey are organizing a workshop to take place in **Antalya, Turkey, on 28 and 29 October 2010.**

Informal settlements are improvised dwellings where housing has been constructed without the requisite legal title for use of the land. More than 50 million people in the UNECE region live in informal settlements today. In some cases, due to the lack of affordable housing, constructions are built on public or private lands with no legal ownership rights. In other cases, good quality housing is built without planning permits and in violation of land use plans. In consequence, its occupiers can have neither security of tenure, nor access to basic infrastructure (such as potable water and sanitation) nor services (e.g. schools, hospitals, public transportation, etc.). Informal settlements are also often built in hazardous locations and their dwellers suffer from social segregation.

According to a recent UNECE study (Self made cities: in search of sustainable solutions for informal settlements in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region), the quality of life for dwellers in informal settlements could be greatly enhanced if more socially responsible housing policy is introduced. Informal communities are the result of long-term trends in urban development that include rapid urbanization, poverty, displacement of refugees due to wars, dysfunctional land management, inadequate spatial planning systems and shortage of affordable housing. Because its causes are multidimensional in nature, holistic policies are necessary to achieve sustainable solutions. Equal, affordable and secure access to land and housing are fundamental to improving living conditions, and effective regulatory tools should be part of any serious policy reform.

The potential for spatial planning to integrate and coordinate different strategies dealing with land and housing issues has been acknowledged by governments. In what concerns land administration authorities, appropriate cadastral and land registration systems must be set up along with effective land and real property records to make information available to the general public on land rights and use as well as on real property transactions. Providing adequate security of tenure is a pre-requisite for extending entitlements to housing rights, which are guaranteed under international law and are also part of the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, streamlining registration and conveyance procedures and reducing their costs will contribute not only to safeguard the interests of owners but also of those who may have legitimate claims on the land they inhabit but lack the necessary means to engage in productive activities. Thus the need to experiment with ground-breaking policies that combine measures to enhance tenure security, such as extended subsidies for the upgrading of settlements and effective social housing developments for relocation of vulnerable families.

Participants in the workshop will be encouraged to discuss the implication of efficient registration systems for the development of well functioning housing markets, the development of mortgage credits as well as micro-credit as well as other policies that could be deemed important for expanding the spectrum of housing tenure in emerging economies and countries in transition. Some of the key questions to be discussed during the workshop include the following:

How important is spatial planning to prevent the spread of informal settlements and what are the roles of various government levels?

How important is the development of integrated National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) for guaranteeing security of tenure and how could it be improved to account for the needs of dwellers in informal settlements?

How does cooperation occur between national authorities in charge of spatial planning and municipal authorities? What are the implications of increased coordination required for the extension of cadastre and registration services, the development of mortgage finance and micro-credit?

What housing policies (social housing, housing loans, subsidies, etc) have proved more effective to reduce informality, and in which national contexts?

What are the lessons learned of experiences with legalization?

What combinations of fees, penalties and other sanctions have proved successful to reduce informality and in what contexts?

What recommendations contained in the study Self Made Cities have since been adopted by government authorities and what were the results?

How can the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups be accommodated in the design of public policy and what is the role of NGOs and citizen organizations involved in urban regeneration projects?

The objective is to discuss good practice experiences of spatial planning to reduce the incidence of informal settlements in the UNECE region and to ascertain what responsibilities property registration institutions and cadastres should assume as fundamental agencies that can guarantee the extension of housing tenure to all sectors of the population. Speakers from government

institutions, private sector, academia and NGOs are invited to participate in the event.

For more information and if you wish to participate as a speaker, please contact:

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GREENING REAL ESTATE MARKETS: A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE

29-30 November 2010, Dessau, Germany

BACKGROUND

As governments in the UNECE region evaluate the effects of policies adopted to stimulate their economies and lead their countries out of recession, the potential of green investments to create more sustainable growth is not always acknowledged. Yet there is evidence that environmentally sustainable investments are compatible with growth. Studies in "Ecological" or "Green" economics have been undertaken that explore the benefits of a more intensive use of green technologies. In contrast with traditional approaches to cost-benefit analysis, green economics incorporates in the analysis of economic problems the adverse impact of human activities on climate change and their effect on the welfare of future generations. Among other advantages, a transition towards a green economy will ensure energy generation based on renewable resources to substitute for fossil fuels and to promote energy conservation. In order for transformations to be sustainable in the long term, green economies need to be able to increase employment levels, ensure real output growth, prevent pollution and reduce resource depletion.

Considered a nodal point for many services and industries, the real estate sector has a key role to play to steer adaptation to climate change in the UNECE region. A more intensive use of green technologies by developers could radically transform the city landscapes of the region. Furthermore, it has been estimated that green investments will have a substantial multiplier effect on a country's gross domestic product, in addition to savings in building operation costs for families. In some countries, such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland, some positive steps have already been taken through the successful promotion, over the last two decades, of so-called passive housing and net zero buildings. But even in these cases, which are not representative of the region as a whole, the conversion has been limited. Overall, consolidating the necessary adaptations will require not only funding, but also motivation and awareness among citizens.

For instance, in what concerns new building construction and retrofitting of existing housing stock, technologies and materials to

improve the energy efficiency of residences are already available. However, the business potential for the sector remains unexploited. Many countries (in particular, less economically developed ones) lack the necessary resources to overcome what has been referred to as the “energy inefficiency trap.” In addition, even in advanced industrialized countries, a series of barriers and challenges remain that prevent the potential of green investments from being realized. These barriers, which vary from country to country, are mainly legal and institutional rather than technical. They involve “split incentives” problems, such as those confronting tenants versus landlords, or developers versus municipalities that prevent the internalization of costs and benefits attached to behavioral change. Coping with these hurdles will require adopting a multi-stakeholder perspective that acknowledges existing interests and constraints on a variety of actors. These include not only real estate firms, banks, and insurers but also consumers, municipalities and national government officials.

Firstly, a prerequisite for a wider and more intensive use of green technologies is the need for continued skill development among developers and awareness about the advantages of green investments among consumers. Besides, there is the need for appropriate policies and institutions to support the undertaking of innovations, as investments in green technologies do not occur spontaneously. Incentives will need to be created for a variety of actors to modify their traditional behavior patterns.

During the transition, governments need to assume responsibilities to tackle existing hindrances. In the context of broad national strategies, comprehensive solutions - that involve both supply and demand side approaches- will need to be gradually implemented. Government capacities should be enhanced and fiscal incentives should be applied, for instance, to the organization of energy pricing and billing (e.g. tax credits for consumers to switch to fuel-efficient and non-polluting buildings). Other regulatory reforms, including the updating of valuation standards and certification for developers, will also need to be discussed.

UPCOMING EVENT

Over the last two years, the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) has contributed to the activities of the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration through capacity-building activities, dissemination of information on good practice and know-how on specific policy areas related to the real estate sector. Specifically on the subject above referred, REM, together with the UNECE, is organizing a workshop on greening real estate markets to be hosted by the German Federal Environment Agency in Dessau, Germany (29-30 November 2010). Speakers and participants in the event will review existing obstacles and ascertain economic and social benefits associated to a green real estate sector as follows:

- The impact of a more intensive use of green technologies on the durability of homes and the lower operations and maintenance costs for families;
- The role of local authorities in the design of public private partnerships;
- Existing tax-incentives available to facilitate green retrofits and new construction and the trade-offs involved for targeted regulatory schemes;
- The potential of updating certification and existing accounting practices of firms to better quantify the effect of green investments;
- The introduction of green building valuation methods in the analysis of risk for investments with real estate collateral;
- The impact of increased use of green technologies on higher productivity and better health of populations through improved living spaces;

- The impact of green updates for countries facing restrictions in access to vital resources (such as water).

The goal of the workshop is to learn from the experience of stakeholders and to discuss challenges and opportunities for UNECE Member States. The outcomes of the event will allow participants to identify policy guidance and set priorities on how to intensify the use of green technologies in the real estate sector.

For more information, please check out the following link:

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/umweltoekonomie-e/veranstaltungen/greening/index.php>

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON NATURAL DISASTERS AND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION SAFETY 16 - 17 November 2010, Baku, Azerbaijan

Across the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region, people and the places where they live are at risk. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and flooding cause material devastation and human casualties. Human casualties and damage to the housing stock can be avoided if an effective system of disaster prevention, including provisions for building safety, is created. National building codes in the region should conform to the highest standards, but more importantly, be enforced, in order to prevent these disasters.

Risk for natural disasters is widespread throughout the ECE region. It affects countries in all sub-regions, from North America over Western, Southern and South-Eastern Europe to Central Asia. Specific regional risks vary by geography and geology. It is in the interest of each country to evaluate their situation, study the potential for disaster and implement sound land-use planning and building codes accordingly.

Each settlement has its own geological, geographical and cultural specificities. However, there are similarities and solutions that can be evaluated and adjusted for each particular situation. It is important to learn from each other, as very few cities or even national governments have experience with more than one 50 or 100-year disaster event.

Sub-regions share important characteristics in building types, income levels, geography and geology. It is important that national Governments involve their municipal governments in the learning process and in sharing their experience since much of the responsibility for implementation and enforcement of policy changes will fall on them.

The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management has decided to address this problem and organize an international forum on building safety/disaster preparedness, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 16-17 November 2010.

The forum will focus on the two dimensions of building safety in relation to natural disasters: prevention and post-disaster reconstruction. Prevention for disasters is a complex process in which building safety and land management play a crucial role. The forum will look at a number of case studies that highlight the risks involved and the importance of being proactive in assessing the potential for disasters, bearing in mind the specificities of each country. In this context, the value of improved building codes, improved land use planning and programmes to retrofit buildings will be highlighted.

The forum will bring together policy makers, building experts, urban planners, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector to address prevention and post-disaster reconstruction measures.

To participate, please contact the UNECE Secretariat.

Link:

<http://www.unece.org/hlm/prgm/hmm/construction%20safety/baku/welcome.htm>

For more information, please contact Mr. Jakob Krupka at jakob.krupka@unece.org

TENURE TRENDS IN THE UK HOUSING SYSTEM

Will the private rented sector continue to grow?

Publication Date: 2010



Tenure Trends in the UK Housing System

An analysis of recent tenure trends in the UK, with projections for potential future changes over the medium term. The research also examines the implications of these changes and draws particular attention to the need to pay close attention to the needs of those living in an expanded private rented sector.

Analysis of tenure provides a powerful lens for understanding the UK housing system. Important differences can be identified between the three main tenures in the UK. The proportion of households in different tenures – tenure mix – has changed significantly over the last one hundred years. These tenure trends have been the result of a combination of political, economic and social drivers that acted over both the short and long term.

For the first time in a century the relative size of the owner occupied sector has declined and the private rented sector has increased significantly. If recent trends persist, the private rented sector would be larger than the social rented sector by 2013 and by the end of the decade, one in five households could be private renters. It seems reasonable to assume that some of the likely drivers of recent changes in tenure mix will continue and, therefore, that the private rented sector will continue to grow.

It is highly unlikely that the recent addition of one million households to the private rented sector is entirely driven by choice. Therefore, there is an urgent need to ensure that private renting is able to meet the requirements of the households who would prefer to live in other tenures. Otherwise private renting is in danger of becoming the tenure of last resort, an unsatisfactory default option for households who do not have the choice to access social housing or owner occupation.

A NOTE ON THE COORDINATOR:



Inputs to this newsletter are coordinated and edited by Ms. **Cecilia Batac**. You may contact her at Cecilia.Batac@unece.org

Disclaimer: This is not a UN official publication. This newsletter is distributed only electronically to CHLM and WPLA members and interested individuals and organizations wishing to receive information on the work on housing and land management. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the United Nations.



World Habitat Awards 2010 An Invitation to Enter



Closing date: **1st November 2010**

The Building and Social Housing Foundation is now accepting entries for the 2010 edition of the World Habitat Awards.

Introduction

Established in 1985, the World Habitat Awards recognise practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to current housing issues faced by countries of the global South as well as the North, which are capable of being transferred or adapted for use elsewhere.

Entries are assessed by a panel of international judges and an award of £10,000 is presented to the two winning projects at the annual United Nations celebration of World Habitat Day.

Who can enter?

The competition is open to all individuals and organisations, including central and local governments, community-based groups, NGOs, research organisations and the private sector from any country of the world.

How to enter

Stage I of the submission process requires only a concise summary of the project. Further details can be found on the World Habitat Awards website at www.worldhabitatawards.org.

All entries must be received by **1st November 2010**.

Please feel free to forward this message to others who may be interested. Should you have any queries, please contact us.

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