Overcoming challenges in access to affordable and social housing

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HOUSING
EUROPE

About Housing Europe in brief

Network of national and regional housing provider federations

- 4,500 public, voluntary housing organisations
- 28,000 cooperative housing organisations

42 members in 22 countries (20 EU Member States)
Manage **25 million dwellings,** about **12% of existing dwellings in the EU**

<u>Vision</u>

Access to decent and affordable housing for all in **communities** which are **socially, economically and environmentally sustainable** and where all are enabled to reach their **full potential**.
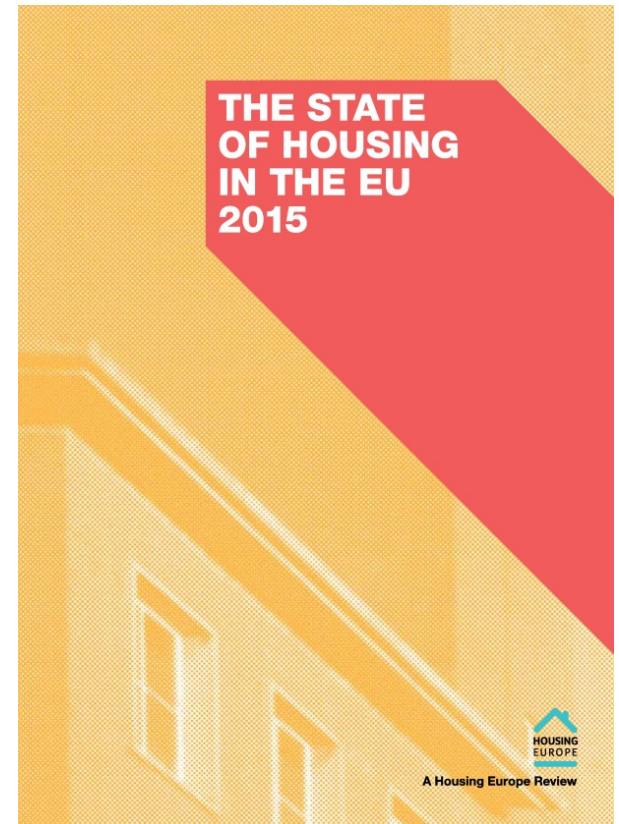
The State of Housing in the EU 2015

There are **more people without a home** today in Europe than six years ago

"Housing is the foundation for people's lives and their priority among their needs."

There are **not enough affordable homes** available in most European countries to face increasing demand

"Having a home is a basic pre-requisite for taking part in society"

THE STATE OF HOUSING IN THE EU 2015

HOUSING EUROPE

A Housing Europe Review

#housingEU

Three major challenges:

- Promote cities which are accessible and affordable for all
- More sustainable, efficient and decentralised energy
- Regions and neighbourhoods where people feel secure and where they can reach their full potential

1. Promote cities and towns which are accessible and affordable for all

- New **social housing production** decreased in most EU countries between 2009 and 2012

- The number of **households on waiting lists** for social housing has increased

- CEE countries: diverse situations but mostly **'countries of home owners'** with little public/social housing

- **High level of debt** linked to housing is a worrying phenomenon - in particular level of mortgages but also arrears on utility bills

- **Young people** have more difficulties to start their housing path compared to the former generation

Increasing pressure on housing due to migration

- Number of **asylum seekers** in OECD countries has recorded a jump from 300,000 in the first quarter of 2014 to **500,000** in 2015. Large scale migration towards and within Europe is **'the new norm'**
- Adding to existing housing 'shortages' (Sweden, UK…). Example Germany: current supply: must increase about 140.000 units a year **+** estimated need for additional 128 000 units due to influx of refugees
- *'Installing tents in football fields, expecting that this could be a shelter for people who fled war and terror: that is not Europe'*

Needed:

- long-term approach recognizing **housing and integration** needs. SH providers have long experience in offering a community services beyond housing provision, fostering social inclusion
- **Cooperation** at different levels: national authorities, housing providers, key role of municipalities
- **Unlocking solutions** and generating additional housing capacity (e.g. transformation of empty public buildings, faster procedures)

2. More sustainable, efficient and decentralised energy

- Between **50 and 125 million people in Europe** are unable to afford thermal comfort
- **Energy Commissioner**: "We need to step up our game. Consider that three quarters of our housing stock is still energy inefficient"

Housing Europe Position on EU's new Energy Union strategy.

1. **Citizen's empowerment**
   - ✓ Fair, clear and secure decentralised access to the grid
   - ✓ Not just smart meters but a wide range of activities, including proper training
2. **Financing of "Energy Efficiency First"**
   - ✓ European funding should be channelled towards both renovation and new construction.
   - ✓ Protection of vulnerable consumers should be a priority
3. **Energy Market Integration**
4. **Enabling existing EU legislation**

3. Neighbourhoods where people feel secure and where they can reach their full potential

"Rich and poor are living at increasing distance from each other. This can be disastrous for the social stability and competitive power of cities"

"This spatial segregation can become a breeding ground for misunderstanding and social unrest"

"Recent riots in Paris, London and Stockholm cannot be considered separately from the concentrations of poverty in these cities. This problem is growing."

Socio-Economic Segregation in European Capital Cities' Study about situation in 2001 - 2011 for thirteen cities.

UNECE & Housing Europe: working together for better housing policies

*'We must **make the link** between people's every day concerns and policy makers at national and EU levels.'*

Many countries are at a crossroads regarding their housing policy and it has to be ensured that they choose the right path for this transition

#Housing4All campaign will serve as a catalyst to bring about this shift not by offering a formula for a perfect housing system as this does not exist, but by linking up practitioners with policy makers and pooling expertise.

A Housing4All capacity-building event

- Against this background: need for exchange to come up with new solutions – capacity building approach
- Joint **UNECE/HE event in Geneva, 14 Sept 2016** - making an impact towards Habitat III
- Target: policy makers and practitioners in UNECE region
- Building on: expertise of Housing Europe members, UNECE Charter on Sustainable Housing & Strategy to 2020
- Structure: a plenary session (high level speakers) to set the broader context, followed by workshops with practical **focus on how to overcome challenges**

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