

## PREFACE

This study on Romania's housing sector is the fifth carried out by the UNECE Committee on Human Settlements to analyse housing sector reform in countries with economies in transition. The first focused on Bulgaria and its results were published in 1996 (ECE/HBP/101). The second study, on Poland, was published in 1998 (ECE/HBP/107); the third, on Slovakia's housing sector, came out in 1999 (ECE/HBP/112); and the fourth, on Lithuania's housing sector was published in 2000 (ECE/HBP/117).

These country-specific strategic housing sector analyses are intended to assist the Governments of countries with economies in transition in improving performance in this sector. They also aim to provide practical information to those with a special interest in the country, such as international lender and donor organizations, technical assistance agencies, or private sector investors, within and outside the country. The objective is to identify positive trends and problem areas, so as to be able to assess the implementation of national policies and strategies, and the social and economic consequences of housing reform for the population and other major actors in the sector. The studies are the work of international teams of experts. They cooperate with governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and the private sector to mobilize available information sources in the country. An international team of experts also draws up recommendations to guide the housing sector reform towards sustainable patterns of housing development.

The UNECE Committee on Human Settlements included the Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Romania in its work programme in September 1999. In January 2000, teams of national and UNECE experts were formed to carry out the study. The Governments of Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and the United Kingdom made national experts available for the task. The travel expenses of the experts from countries in transition and from the UNECE secretariat were covered by extrabudgetary funds, which had been provided by Finland and the Netherlands. The Government of the United Kingdom financed the project coordinator as its contribution in kind. The successful conclusion of the project would not have been possible without this generous support.

The project started with the workshop on housing finance, which took place in Timisoara, at the end of January 2000. The fact-finding mission of the international team of experts took place from 2 to 8 May 2000, the mission to verify the conclusions from 21 to 27 July 2000. The Romanian experts responded to the queries and requests of the international team during both these missions.

The results of this study will be discussed at the annual session of the UNECE Committee's on Human Settlement in September 2001. It is also important to refer to the other studies that UNECE is carrying out in Romania, such as the Environmental Performance Review of Romania. The follow-up process to both projects is important for inter-sectoral policy implementation in the country.