



KEY REQUESTS – MAYORS FOR HOUSING



ENHANCE THE ROLE OF CITIES IN DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING THE EU HOUSING AGENDA

Create a permanent and stable governance mechanism for a direct dialogue between the European Commission's new Housing Task Force and cities.

- The President of the European Commission has appointed Dan Jorgensen as the first-ever Commissioner responsible for Energy and Housing. His main tasks include the development of a European Affordable Housing Plan and a pan European Investment Platform for Affordable and Sustainable Housing.
- In the Mission Letter to the Commissioner-designate, the President establishes the creation of a Task Force dedicated to housing, which will play a coordination role in this area within the European Commission under the political guidelines of the Commissioner.
- In the framework of the European Affordable Housing Plan, we understand that the European Commission intends to consult widely on the plan and its related initiatives. In this respect, an Opinion on the potential role of cities and regions in the EU Affordable Housing Plan is being drafted in the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget of the Committee of the Regions, led by the Mayor of Barcelona, Mr Jaume Collboni.
- Since European cities' inhabitants are the most affected by housing affordability challenges, municipalities' input and feedback are crucial to ensure that the European Affordable Housing Plan and the pan-European Investment Platform for Affordable and Sustainable Housing have an impact on the ground.
- Building on the progress made by Housing Partnership under the Urban Agenda of the European Union in terms of multi-stakeholder governance structures, we recognise that cities are crucial partners for the effective implementation of housing policies. We are eager to work closely with the newly-created Housing Task Force and propose the creation of a stable policy development and monitoring platform. This would enable joint design and implementation of the European Affordable Housing Plan and the pan-European Investment Platform for Affordable and Sustainable Housing.

Develop initiatives on housing and cities to provide fast, effective and efficient access to housing financial assistance in urban areas.

- We recognise the need to expand grant opportunities for cities, in addition to financial instruments such as revolving funds, to allow for long-term investments in social and affordable housing, beyond political terms of office.
- We celebrate the European Commission's commitment to doubling Cohesion policy allocations to housing in the 2021-2027 period.
- We believe Cohesion policy should not only address energy-efficiency investments in the existing housing stock but also include long-term affordability criteria both in retrofitted and new-built social and affordable housing as a matter of economic, social and territorial cohesion.
- Cohesion policy post-2027 should be structured around macro challenges, including housing. In order to be agile and impactful, part of the EU Cohesion Funds should be directly channelled to local governments. We propose to set up such an initiative by drawing inspiration from the EU Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, articulating a fast track for cities in the granting of EU funds for social and affordable housing, as well as for the fight against homelessness.
- We propose that future unclaimed Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) resources, as well as decommitted funds not available to Member State governments due to rule of law conditionality deficits or other non-compliances, be repurposed and directly allocated to local governments to invest in social and affordable housing.

INCREASE HOUSING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIES

Provide additional financing to increase the supply of affordable housing and to ensure a just and inclusive energy transition in the existing housing stock.

- Cities across Europe, regardless of their share of social and affordable housing, are facing a growing shortage of housing options for low- and middle-income households, essential workers and young people.
- Retrofitting the existing housing stock presents a critical opportunity to accelerate the energy transition. However, it also creates an affordability challenge for significant segments of our population.
- Mobilising vacant or underused public and private buildings and plots can contribute to increasing the supply of affordable housing, but it requires large long-term investment commitments.
- We welcome the establishment of a pan-European Investment Platform for Affordable and Sustainable Housing and call for a substantial increase in affordable housing financing available to cities through the European Investment Bank. This will help cities tackle both the housing shortage and the energy transition simultaneously.
- We encourage Member States to reallocate unspent resources from their National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) to financial instruments devoted to the construction and renovation of social and affordable housing in order to funnel RRF housing investment beyond 2026.
- We also propose that EU fiscal and debt rules be revised in order to exclude investments in affordable housing from the deficit and debt ceilings set by the Growth and Stability Pact, as it is already being considered for defence spending.

ENABLE BROADER INVESTMENTS IN SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Reform State Aid rules in housing while providing the necessary funding for the fight against homelessness.

- The current EU State Aid framework, and notably SGEI Decision 2012/21/EU on State aid for public service compensation, has restricted cities' capacity to invest in affordable housing solutions, due to its focus on "disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups".
- The current housing crisis has extended far beyond socially less advantageous groups, and this is why cities are urgently calling for a revision of state aid rules to broaden, under certain conditions, the scope of such target group, while respecting Member States' discretion in planning, delivering, financing, and organising the construction of social and affordable housing.
- Broadening investment opportunities in social and affordable housing can also positively impact social cohesion by promoting socially mixed neighbourhoods and fostering more inclusive and integrated communities.
- Enabling broader investment in affordable housing should not come at the expense of funding available for the fight against homelessness and for disadvantaged or less socially privileged individuals. On the contrary, a specific European fund should be set for this purpose as part of the next multiannual financial framework, and a portion should be directly managed by local authorities.

INTEGRATE CONSIDERATIONS OF EQUITY AND SOCIAL COHESION INTO EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES AIMED AT THE ENERGY TRANSITION OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Reconcile the energy transition, accessibility and affordability in the existing housing stock.

- Recognising the importance of the energy transition in the current climate crisis context, and the importance of the energy retrofitting of the existing housing stock, we acknowledge that housing renovation should not come at the expense of housing affordability and social cohesion. In addition, building renovations should integrate universal accessibility criteria, given the context of an increasingly ageing population and to guarantee the rights of people with disabilities.
- Allocation of funds should enable equal access and participation in the energy transition for the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged households. We encourage the adoption of progressive support measures, tailored to the different socio-economic realities, that support permanent affordability criteria in the allocation of public funds.
- We call on the EU institutions to integrate these considerations and incorporate affordability performance indicators into their energy transition programs, such as the Social Climate Fund, as well as in NRRPs and national energy and climate plans.

EU REGULATION ON SHORT-TERM RENTALS HOUSING STOCK

Strengthen regulations on short-term rentals to facilitate enforcement by competent authorities.

- Having witnessed the impact that tourist accommodations and short-term rentals can have on housing affordability and social cohesion.
- Acknowledging that the regulation of this segment of the housing market is primarily the competence of national, regional and local governments.
- We congratulate the EU Institutions for making the STR regulation on data collection and data-sharing obligations possible. We urge that EU Institutions actively encourage all Member States to implement this regulation, as this is crucial to enforce local regulations, stop illegal STR practices, protect consumers and promote housing affordability.
- With regard to the STR regulation on data sharing obligations, we believe cross border enforcement needs to be improved when STR platforms do not comply with their data-sharing obligations or continue to facilitate illegal practices.

