



## Position of Housing Europe on the EU Pillar of social rights

Contribution to the Public Consultation of the European Commission

### 1. General context of the European Pillar of Social Rights in relation to housing

The stated objective of the EU pillar of social rights is to urge Member States to adapt their social protection systems to the new trends and challenges in work patterns and societies and thus allows for a convergence within the Eurozone.

Regarding the new trends and challenges, Housing Europe has a basic assumption: if people do not have a roof over their head and a degree of certainty about their future, an income, assurance of safety in their neighbourhood as well as affordable and quality social services and education, there is no confidence and no sustainable growth.

In a politically and economically difficult context in the EU, Housing Europe, with its campaign Housing4all pleads to:

- Build more public, social and cooperative housing
- Increase the quality of existing homes
- Make the cities more inclusive

The details of the policy demands can be found here: <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-646/overview-of-the-campaign-asks>

**The EU pillar of social rights, if adequately shaped, can help supporting those demands. Indeed it can:**

1. Promote a **more preventive** social protection by urging Member States to invest in housing affordability, quality, diversity, desegregation and security of tenure for a broad range of the population
2. Foster a **more efficient** social protection by fostering the contribution of local partnerships between social service providers and providers of social, public and cooperative housing to work together in order to deliver better and cost efficient approaches to key societal challenges.
3. Promote a **more reactive** social protection by using big and small data management and analysis in order to monitor changes in people's (housing) needs and better assess the impact of social housing activities on various fields. This could help policy makers and housing providers to take good decisions in terms of investment, service provision, housing allocation

## **2. What the European Pillar of Social Rights should be**

The European Pillar of Social Rights should serve as guideline to ensure coherence between the different EU policies and instruments which have an impact on social, cooperative and public housing. It should serve to improve existing mechanisms (in particular in the European coordination of economic policies).

The European pillar of Social Rights should therefore bring the European Commission to:

4. Integrate existing indicators on housing affordability, energy poverty, housing exclusion (and homelessness) in the European Semester's Macroeconomic Imbalances Scoreboard in order to improve the analysis of housing markets and housing policies.
5. Use country specific recommendations to urge Member States to invest in social, public and cooperative housing to solve housing needs. The country specific recommendations should highlight the need for tenure neutrality policy and urge Member States to stimulate the supply of a variety of adequate housing options that are safe, affordable, and accessible for members of different income groups of society, thus preventing segregation
6. Adapt the Stability and Growth Pact as well ESA 2010 deficit rules for investments in social infrastructures in order to allow Member States to continue support social, cooperative and public housing
7. Take into consideration the recommendations of the Housing Partnership created under the new Urban Agenda for the EU and the Pact of Amsterdam
8. Strengthen the role of the EIB and the European Fund for Strategic Investments in promoting long term funding for social infrastructures (in particular housing)

## **3. Proposed reformulation of the text of point 19 -Annex of the EPSR consultation document (in bold the amended text)**

*"Lack of adequate and affordable housing as well as increasing housing costs overburden continue to be a large concern across the EU for a wide range of the population, leading to arrears in rental and mortgage payments, evictions, and in some cases, homelessness. Lack of adequate housing also remains a barrier for labour mobility, for the establishment of young people on the labour market and for fulfilment of life plans and independent living.*

*Access to quality and affordable housing in safe and thriving living environments shall be provided for those, **whose housing needs are not met adequately**. Support for low and medium income households **should be tenure neutral**. Demand support **should be balanced with supply policies to prevent scarcity, unaffordability and speculation**. The supply of a variety of adequate housing options that are safe, affordable, and accessible for members of different income groups of society, as well as for vulnerable groups, such as homeless, thus preventing segregation, is crucial in order to maintain a high level of social inclusion and sustainable growth. Protection against eviction of vulnerable people shall be ensured.*



## About Us

Housing Europe is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing.

Established in 1988, it is a network of 43 national and regional federations which together gather about 43.000 public, social and cooperative housing providers in 23 countries. Altogether they manage over 26 million homes, about 11% of existing dwellings in the EU.

Social, public and co-operative housing providers have a vision of a Europe which provides **access to decent and affordable housing for all in communities which are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and where everyone is enabled to reach their full potential.**

Therefore, they do not just provide affordable homes but a number of other services such as:

- Domiciliary care and support services for residents with specific needs
- Additional services for tenants (kindergartens, community centres, employment and training services, financial advice)
- Neighbourhood services
- Management of other types of 'sheltered' accommodation
- Urban development and urban regeneration

Find out more on <http://www.housingeurope.eu/>