

Housing for all:

a call for a renewed European ambition

We,

*Mayors and metropolises, and representatives of European cities,
FEANTSA,
Housing Europe,
The URBAN Intergroup,*

Call all on the EU institutions to put access to **adequate and affordable housing** at the heart of the priorities of the next mandate of the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The housing crisis **affects the lives of many European citizens and obstructs progress on** at least 3 European policy priorities:

- **Employment**
- **Social inclusion**
- **Democracy**

First of all, the economic recovery and the possibility of achieving 'full employment' in Europe are hampered by the lack of affordable housing close to employment areas. **Frontline workers**, providing services that are **essential for our society** to function properly – social workers, nurses, cashiers, cleaners, public transport drivers, social service workers, etc. – **can no longer access housing in our cities**. The price of housing, whether rented or purchased, is pushing the less well-off workers, who often have working hours and patterns that require proximity between home and work, further away. We are all faced with recruitment difficulties because **the price of housing is disconnected from the income level** of a growing proportion of job seekers. Every year, this problem affects more and more of the middle class workers too.

The lack of affordable housing in cities is in part due to the fact that **housing is also seen as a lucrative investment for financial markets**. Cities are trying to regulate the land and property markets to tackle speculation that aggravates existing dynamics of exclusion. However they are confronted with a lack of power to achieve this. They do not have the necessary regulatory and financial tools to counteract mechanisms playing out on a completely different scale.

The European Union must support cities in regulating the housing market, which as a common good cannot be assimilated to an investment.

We cities are convinced of the challenge and are deploying actions to **combat rising housing prices**: rent control, tax on vacant dwellings, limitation of short term tourist accommodation, even expropriation of institutional landlords. But the speculative investments pressure into the real estate market are driving up housing prices and reducing their accessibility for citizens, while policies to support the income of renting households ensure stable returns for investors.

All European metropolises are facing the problem of unaffordable housing. More and more people are being relegated to the outskirts of cities. **The poorest and most vulnerable are excluded and experience homelessness.**

We call for a social Europe.

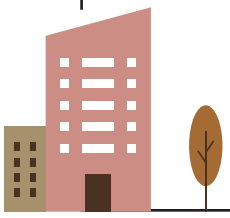
The fight against homelessness is a key issue in preserving social cohesion. The launch of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness is a first step. We must now give it the means to achieve the objective declared in Lisbon of **eradicating homelessness in Europe by 2030**. From this perspective, the deployment of Housing First and housing-led solutions for homeless people is the right way forward. Therefore reinforcing the supply of affordable housing and support services is necessary. In addition to supply, access for the most vulnerable must be ensured. The territories and in particular the cities, as the relevant level of implementation, must be supported in their actions.

The housing crisis highlights the democratic challenges we are experiencing. **Access to decent and affordable housing is a fundamental right, essential for human development and fulfilment.** Cities want to regain their capacity to intervene to ensure that everyone has access to it. **Cities are ready to devote significant resources and innovative capacities** to this, but they cannot meet this challenge alone. The European Union must be at their side in a direct dialogue.

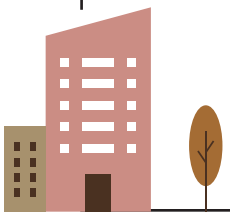
With this declaration we recall that housing is a human right and that the European Union has an essential role to play.

Four areas appear particularly fundamental:

- by regulating the intervention of private investors in housing,
- by regulating the housing market avoiding speculation through rent control laws,
- by putting together a "Next Housing EU plan" to support investments for affordable social housing providers throughout Europe and for the operating needs to provide support services to people,
- by promoting the only way to eradicate homelessness: the provision of self-contained housing and adequate support services, regardless of people's circumstances.



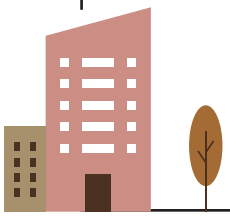
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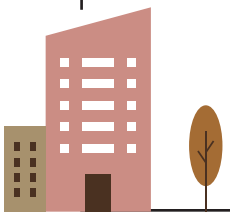
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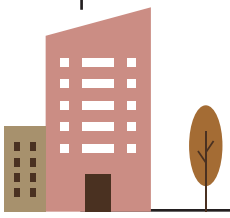
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