



**Spring 2024**

**◆◆◆ S&D Youth Event: Affordable Housing Workshop ◆◆◆**



On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, in the framework of the S&D Youth Event **“My Choice My Voice”** was organised the workshop entitled “Decent and affordable housing for all” by the PES group in the European Committee of the Regions. **Barbara Steenbergen**, Member of the IUT Executive Committee and Head of the IUT Liaison Office with the EU, set the scene of the event with an opening while moderating the interventions of the various panellists.

The lack of affordable, social, and sustainable housing is fuelling a housing crisis without precedent all over Europe, a crisis that is exacerbated by rising living costs, by the need to integrate refugees and migrants and by energy scarcity at a time in which climate change is accelerating. This crisis impacts everyone, but in particular young people and the elderly, single parents, and other vulnerable groups in society.

The workshop involved a number of progressive stakeholders that are active in the field of housing. It started presenting what the European Union is currently doing and what it is needed to achieve in order to successfully address the many challenges of housing.

Acknowledging at the same time that there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions. The introduction of the workshop was carried out by **Christophe Rouillon**, President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions, and Mayor of Coulaines, which is the municipality in France with the highest percentage of social housing.

**Christophe Rouillon** highlighted that 47% of young Europeans, between 18 and 34, are forced to live at home with their parents because of the increasingly higher rent prices. Moreover, only 17% of young students have access to student housing. Europe in the last 20 years, has seen a stop of new constructions for affordable rental housing while in parallel, there has been a big shift in home ownership,

paired with investments for buildings and sales for the wealthy.

In average in Europe, tenants pay 1/3 of their disposable income in rent, but nowadays the average share is 45% of the income and in some cases, it can be up to 60%. For example, in 2023 in Belgium there was increase in rents by 12 % which is the highest ever.



Speakers Agnes Jongerius MEP, Christophe Rouillon, Barbara Steenbergen and Veronika Iwanowski

The workshop followed with the thematic debate on housing and urban planning, moderated by Barbara Steenbergen. The first speaker **Veronika Iwanowski**, International Relations from the City of Vienna, presented the model of the City of Vienna, which was nominated several times the world's most liveable city. Vienna counts approximately 2 million of residents and more of 50% live in social housing. The Vienna Housing system is 100 years old and is characterised by unlimited rental contracts in the housing sector.

The second speaker **Agnes Jongerius**, Member of the European Parliament from the S&D group, and The Netherlands shared her contribution on the unclear competence of the European Parliament and of the European Union in general on housing and on which aspects she believes the EU should focus on the next mandate, 2024-2029, to support cities and offer affordable and decent housing for all.

Then followed the thematic debate on housing and youth, in which **Allison Gilliland**, Chairperson of Dublin City Council Strategic Policy Committee for Housing and Member of the European Committee of the Regions, and **Martin Casier**, Member of the Brussels-Region Parliament, shared their contributions on the cities of Dublin and Brussels in which the tenants are experiencing more and more the effects of financialization, gentrification and of renovations. In Brussels, most of the tenants pay a 12% higher rent than last year and the quota for public housing is still at 6.7%.

The workshop was concluded with a debate and subsequent vote on several resolutions inherent to solve the Housing issue in Europe such as: the proposal on establishing a quota of 30% of social housing and of another 30% of affordable housing; creating an EU plan to tackle the student housing crisis, approving a Real Estate Free Transparency Register, establishing support programmes for vulnerable households, develop an EU plan for intergenerational housing and finally implementing Housing as a fundamental human rights, keeping up the issue of gender equality and discriminations in the housing sector.

The debate and proposal that were discussed during the Housing Workshop were consequently taken in the closing session of the S&D Youth Event, which took place in the hemicycle of the European Parliament. **Alberto Bortolotti**, Young European Socialists Vice President and doctoral researcher in Urban planning, Design and Policy in the Polytechnic University of Milan, gave a speech including the points and concerns on the Housing crisis raised during the workshop.<sup>1</sup>

**Alberto Bortolotti** explained that over the last 3 decades in Europe, we have witnessed the

<https://youtube.com/shorts/wuNXyeQxw2Q>

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<sup>1</sup> Youth on Housing Crisis:

decrease of social housing contrasted by the increase in luxury housing and the rise of energy costs leading to increased living expenses. These phenomena altogether have resulted in imbalances and discrepancies between: wages, rents, and salaries. In fact, the current housing situation should become a top priority for both people and politics. The latter especially, such as the S&D group in the European Parliament should prioritize housing in their electoral program for the near European Elections, which will take place between 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

## **UN Human Rights Talk: Ensuring the right to housing in Europe's green transition.**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March took place took place the UN Human Rights Talk Conference entitled "Ensuring the right to housing in Europe's green transition" at the UN House in Brussels. The event was opened by **Elena Kountouri Tapiero**, Regional representative for Europe UN Human Rights, which explained its aim to bring together different stakeholders to discuss on human rights, in an intersectional way with other issues such as housing and the green transition. She stated that the advancement in human rights can't be carried out without focusing on the right to housing. It is necessary to invest in adaptation to climate change and resilience, especially safeguarding the most vulnerable who are at risk of marginalisation.

The second speaker, **Maria Aldanas**, policy officer at FEANTSA and Coordinator of Housing Rights Watch, explained that they have been focusing on the risk and opportunities of the European Green Deal, which can lead to a further marginalisation and social exclusion of the most vulnerable if it is not carried out including social safeguards to protect the poorest, which will be the ones affected the most by the effects of the green transition.

Reclaiming financial gains from land value through spatial planning for spatial justice and combating rent increases by regulating the space market and renting prices were highlighted by the speaker as strategies necessary to address the housing crisis. In specific, **Alberto Bortolotti** remarked the urgency to call for an EU-funded plan for affordable housing, to advocate for the creation of a real estate transaction transparency register and to push for universal designs in housing strategies.

The event continued with the speech of **Balakrishnan Rajagopal**, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate Housing, which highlighted that being in a time of enormous and interconnected challenges, he tried to address them in his Report on the global affordable housing crisis. Firstly, he underlined that homelessness has to be addressed as a priority. Secondly, he remarked that the climate and the housing crisis are extremely connected since the green transition can and will be expensive, and this economic burden doesn't have to be passed on the most vulnerable people.

The event continued with a panel discussion involving: **Tadhg O'Briain**, Deputy Head of Unit Consumers, Local initiative, Just Transition at DG Energy, EC; **Bernard Mazjin**, Cabinet of the Minister for Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development and Green Deal of Belgium; **Anna Bajomi**, Energy Poverty Policy Officer at FEANTSA and finally **Marlies Hesselman**, Assistant Professor International Law at the University of Groningen. The closing was carried out by **Elena Kountouri Tapiero**, which united in one general view the contributions shared by the academic, NGO, UN and EU institutions representatives on the right to housing, energy poverty and the necessary green energy transition.

# EESC Civil Society Week: Next Steps for Democracy!



From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) brought together more than 800 participants of all ages and backgrounds from civil society to build a vibrant debate on the upcoming 2024 European elections and on Europe’s future. The main takeaway from this week, is that democracy thrives on the strength and engagement of civil society. Across Europe, the voices and actions of civil society play a pivotal role in shaping policy, holding leaders accountable and safeguarding the rights and freedom of citizens.

During the week’s many sessions organised by EESC Liaison Group members, ECI (European Citizens Initiative) Day partners and young YEYS (Your Europe Your Say) participants from across Europe, civil society came up with a comprehensive set of actionable steps to enhance democratic principles across our continent.



The main themes that were discussed and addressed during the Civil Society Week were:

Resilient democracies, civil space and dialogue, citizens participation, youth engagement and active participation, digital transformation and an economy that works for people.

**Oliver Röpké**, President of the EESC, opened by underlining the importance of 2024 as a stress for democracy around the world. He welcomed this conference as an opportunity to give a strong and united response from civil society to a multitude of challenges that pose serious threats to European democracy and its values, such as the Housing crisis.

The Civil Society Week was a succession of panel discussions and workshops, in which various speakers expressed their diverse perspectives and insights on the trajectory of democracy in Europe.

In the closing session of Civil Society Week, which offered civil society a change to voice their expectations from the from the next EU mandate and to have a debate with high-level institutional representatives about their vision and for a more democratic Europe. The key elements from the session will feed into the EESC’s resolution for the new mandate to be adopted in July.

## Delivering Green Investments in Cities: Is EU Recovery Plan Meeting Its Promises?



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, a Breakfast Debate on "Delivering Green Investments in Cities: Is EU Recovery Plan Meeting Its Promises?" was held by the Urban Intergroup and Eurocities at the

European Parliament. The discussion focused on evaluating the efficacy of the European Union's recovery plan in meeting its objectives, particularly in relation to green investments in urban areas. The event brought together policymakers, representatives from local authorities, and experts to analyse the status and provide recommendations for improvement.

The debate was opened by **Jan Olbrycht, MEP**, President of the Urban Intergroup, who emphasized the importance of understanding the future of Cohesion Policy and its relationship with the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). He also highlighted some concerns regarding the methodological differences between Cohesion Policy and RRF, as well as the need for effective planning and partnership at various administrative levels.

During the presentation of the Urban Recovery Watch **André Sobczak**, Secretary-general of Eurocities advocated for the continued relevance of Cohesion Policy alongside RRF, stressing the necessity of involving local entities in the decision-making process, while also raising concerns about the negative impacts of RRF on fund allocation and urged for deeper examination of its effects. **Pietro Reviglio**, Policy advisor at Eurocities, presented the key findings<sup>2</sup> on the urban dimension of EU funding instruments, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by cities in accessing and using RRF funds. Highlighted issues such as time pressure, limited consultation, and territorial blind planning, and proposed recommendations for improvement.

During the successive section, regarding the perspective of cities, **Laia Bonet**, Deputy-Mayor of Barcelona, shared examples of successful implementation of RRF funds in green investments, emphasizing the need for greater flexibility, structural funding, and involvement of cities in decision-making processes to ensure effective utilization of funds. **Annalisa Boni**, deputy-mayor of Bologna, stressed the

importance of administrative capacity and partnership in maximizing the benefits of RRF. Advocated for a balanced approach between simplification and empowerment of local authorities, drawing lessons from Cohesion Policy. Finally, **Benedek Javor**, Head of EU representation of Budapest, highlighted challenges faced by the city of Budapest in RRF implementation due to conflicts between national and local governments. Emphasized the importance of partnership, transparency, and anti-corruption measures in ensuring effective fund utilization.

**Siegfried Muresan**, MEP for Romania, provided insights into the perspective of the European Parliament on the nature of RRF as a tool for post-COVID recovery and its evolving role in addressing broader challenges. Raised concerns about the lack of involvement of local authorities and emphasized the need for greater autonomy for cities.

**Johannes Luebking**, Director SG Recovery Task Force, presented the reaction of the European Commission, providing examples of RRF-funded projects across Europe and outlined the Commission's efforts to improve implementation, including stronger involvement of cities and better consultation among different levels of governance.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://eurocities.eu/latest/eu-recovery-plan->

[fails-to-deliver-cities-investment-needs/](https://eurocities.eu/latest/eu-recovery-plan-fails-to-deliver-cities-investment-needs/)

## CEER Customer Conference 2024: “Advancing Energy Transition for Consumer Empowerment”



Speakers Barbara Steenbergen and Baiba Miltoviča

In her opening remarks, **Annegret Groebel**, CEER President, emphasized the importance of including customers in discussions regarding energy transition legislation and regulation. She stressed the need for consumers to play an active role in shaping the energy transition agenda within the EU. In the subsequent Keynote Speech, **Baiba Miltoviča**, President of the Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure, and the Information Society (TEN) at EESC, highlighted two main points: market design and consumer empowerment, emphasizing the necessity of changes in EU regulation to address energy affordability, sustainability, and stability of supply. She also underlined the importance of a strong regulatory framework to guarantee a stable and affordable energy supply while considering the need for decarbonization. **Miltoviča** underlined the role of civil society actors in driving a successful energy transition and called for a shift from energy poverty to energy affordability.

In the first Panel on Reinforcing Consumer Protection Frameworks **Guillaume Joly**, Senior Sustainable Buildings Officer at BEUC, discussed the new definition of Energy Poverty and highlighted the importance of On Bill schemes in helping households renovate their

buildings. **Barbara Steenbergen**, Member of the IUT Executive Committee, International Union of Tenants, addressed the challenges faced by tenants in the context of energy market regulations. She emphasized the negative impact of rent increases resulting from energy renovation costs passed on to tenants, stressing the need for social safeguards to protect consumers. She also commended the inclusion of measures in the EPBD directive aimed at mitigating rent increases and renoventions, highlighting the directive's potential to aid those unable to afford renovations.

During the second Panel “Unleashing Consumers' Potential” **Stavroula Pappa**, Policy Advisor at REScoop, discussed the potential of energy cooperatives in empowering consumers and fighting inflation. **Rita Mota**, Chair of Retail Market Design Working Group at Eurelectric, highlighted the importance of consumer engagement and the barriers to achieving it. **Marit Serrianna Stenødegård Hjerpseth**, Sectional Engineer in Customer Affairs & Network Regulation (NVE-RME), exposed a model for sharing surplus renewable energy production to equalize opportunities for local energy production for single houses and building apartments.

In the third Panel “Paving the Way for Decarbonized Households” **Gert De Block**, Secretary General for CEDEC, discussed the role of political choices, cooperation between energy distributors, and the importance of regulatory support in achieving energy efficiency in buildings and heat decarbonization. **Mélanie Bourgeois**, Energy Cities, underlined the role of cities in decarbonising municipal owned building also advocating also incite the renovation of all buildings present on the city's territory. **Jane Dennett-Thorpe**, Deputy Director for Net Zero Strategy of Ofgem, talked about the new roles and duties of regulators, not only protecting consumers' interests but also helping them in meeting the targets.

In its final remarks, **Alejandro Ulzurrun**, Head of Unit B1 at DG ENER, European Commission, summarized key insights from the conference, emphasizing progress towards a consumer-centric energy transition. He highlighted the potential of legislation to protect consumers

## Declaration of Portimão Affordable Housing Needs in Europe

The Declaration of Portimão<sup>3</sup>, issued by progressive local and regional leaders on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, sheds light on the issue of affordable housing in Europe. IUT was represented by **Johan Mirtorp**, Chair of the Housing Policy Working Group. The document emphasizes the urgency of addressing the housing crisis, exacerbated by rising living costs, energy prices, and climate change concerns. The key challenges and proposed measures to tackle the affordable housing challenge in Europe raised in the declaration:

### Key Challenges

1. **Housing Crisis:** Europe lacks affordable, adequate, and sustainable housing, impacting various groups including the young, elderly, and minorities.
2. **Rising Costs:** Housing expenses have surged, leading to financial strain and insecurity for many.
3. **Overcrowding and Homelessness:** Overcrowded living conditions persist alongside homelessness, affecting hundreds of thousands.
4. **Market Speculation:** Speculation by large investors has driven up rents, exacerbating affordability issues.

### Proposed Measures

and address energy poverty. Ulzurrun also addressed the need for cooperation between stakeholders and the importance of energy sharing, protection against disconnection, and continuity of supply.

1. **EU Intervention:** Increased EU involvement in legislation, funding, and knowledge-sharing is urged to support housing initiatives.
2. **Human Right to Housing:** Programs and funding to prevent and resolve homelessness align with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
3. **Public Investment:** Heightened public investment in housing, especially for social housing, is recommended.
4. **EU Funding Allocation:** A portion of EU funds should be earmarked for social housing projects and infrastructure.
5. **Innovation and Best Practices:** Promotion of community-led and cooperative housing models through a dedicated EU platform.
6. **Market Regulation:** Measures to regulate short-term rentals and mitigate speculation are proposed.
7. **Climate Action:** Support for energy-efficient housing and phasing out fossil fuel heating systems is emphasized.
8. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Collaboration across sectors and raising awareness of gender disparities in housing policies are crucial.
9. **Policy Coordination:** Establishment of an annual EU summit on social and affordable housing to ensure coordinated actions.

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<sup>3</sup> [Affordable Housing Needs Europe – Europe Needs Affordable Housing | PES Group in the](#)

[European Committee of the Regions \(europa.eu\)](#)

## NETCO Event: Sustainable Housing Initiatives.

During an online meeting, organized by Network of Cities for Collaborative Housing (NETCO) and held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2024, representatives from Barcelona, Oslo, and Brussels shared insights into sustainable housing initiatives aimed at addressing various challenges across European cities.

In his introduction **Pierre Arnold**, Community Led Housing specialist urbaMonde & World Habitat, discussed collaborative housing, which encompasses diverse models involving residents and stakeholders. He emphasized the importance of community interests over private ones and highlighted essential criteria for such housing, including shared spaces, resident organizations, affordability, non-speculative land tenure, resident involvement in design, and social integration.

During the round table on the “benefits of Collaborative Housing for cities” **Artur Fornés Salillas**, housing advisor to the Barcelona City Council, provided insights into Barcelona's housing initiatives. He discussed the city's Right to Housing Plan, which focuses on cooperative housing as part of its broader strategy. He outlined key aspects of this plan, including public land transfer, nonprofit cooperative management, individual use rights, and social and environmental criteria. Salillas also detailed various financing mechanisms employed by Barcelona, such as low-rate land

## Eurofound: Housing unaffordability in the EU.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, took place the Eurofound Event entitled “Housing unaffordability in the EU: exclusion, insecurity, problematic housing cost & inadequacy”<sup>4</sup>. **Hans Dubois**, member of Eurofound, presented the research on Housing Affordability in the

transfer, reimbursable grants, tax cuts, and NextGenEU funding. **Kristin Kjaeras**, special adviser on housing for the City of Oslo, shed light on the city's housing challenges and cooperative housing tradition. She highlighted the city's struggles with rising housing prices and limited land availability, despite a high rate of homeownership. Kjaeras discussed Oslo's century-old cooperative housing tradition, emphasizing joint ownership and democratic governance. She also noted recent trends, including increased participation in planning, self-build projects, and innovative housing typologies like co-living. **Rebecca Bosch**, First Attaché, Brussels Housing, discussed the housing situation, characterized by high rental rates, especially among the city's poorest residents. She introduced the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) model, which offers collectively owned land and affordability guarantees. Bosch outlined support measures for sustainable, affordable housing, including subsidies, management contracts, and policy recommendations.

The meeting concluded with key recommendations by Pierre Arnold. He suggested that local and regional governments lease public land and facilitate access to loans for sustainable housing projects and, for the EU, to establish a revolving funding facility for affordable housing and co-fund pilot projects in areas with limited collaborative housing experience.

European Union which contains many facts and figures regarding different level of the current housing issue in Europe.

The research highlight that although Member States face different problems, unaffordable housing is an issue in all and there are dividing lines in the population groups: with low and high incomes, without and with access to social housing, which flexible and fixed rate mortgages, tenants, or homeowners etc.

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<sup>4</sup> [Presentation - hdu - Brussels - April 2024 FINAL](#)

[24042024.pdf](#)



The housing problems affect people’s health and wellbeing, embody unequal living conditions and opportunities and result in increased healthcare costs, reduced productivity, and environmental damage. Moreover, they contribute to labour shortages in geographical areas with low income-housing costs ratios.

Some figures in the research show that the % of people aged 25-34 living in the parental home increased from 26 to 28 between 2007 and 2019. Furthermore, 9.7% of people aged 15-29 live in households spend more than 40% of their income on housing.



Margherita Mango debating with Eurofound

The solutions of the research to the housing affordability crisis are many, such as housing policies, like “Housing First” model and increasing the housing supply ensuring homes are built and renovated, and vacant dwellings reduced. Moreover, measures to reduce energy purchase needs should be implemented, as well as preventive and early intervention measures of accumulating rent, utility, and mortgage payment debts. Although also policies which look beyond housing should be considered. A better connection of sub-urban areas by low-cost public transport and cycling infrastructure and a more secure financial situation of young people should be guaranteed, through employment strategies and social protection.

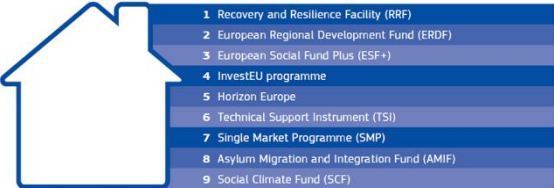
<sup>5</sup> [Social housing and beyond - Publications Office](#)

## Mutual Learning Event – Financing the fight against homelessness, funding opportunities for inclusive policy measures (EPOCH)

On the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April, took place the Meeting of the European Platform Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH) in Brussels entitled “Mutual Learning Event: Financing the fight against homelessness and funding opportunities for inclusive policy measures”. The event started with the opening remarks of **Yves Leterme**, chair of the steering board of EPOCH, and of **Lucie Davoine**, Head of Unit, Disability, and Inclusion DG EMPL European Commission.

Subsequently **Grzegorz Gajewski**, Policy Expert DG Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, presented the operational toolkit on the use of EU funds for investments in social housing and associated services entitled “Social housing and beyond”<sup>5</sup>. The report was published in December 2023 by DG EMPL and is instrumental in shaping discussions and policies in social and inclusive entrepreneurship in the Housing sector.

The toolkit provides an overview of the types of funding available at the EU level to promote social and affordable housing and accompanying services in the 2021-2027 programming period. The 20 case studies included in the toolkit aim to showcase in concrete terms the implementation of a person-centred and a place-based approach to the provision of both housing and of associated



services. The key objective is to provide

[of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

inspiration and to ensure that the maximum possible use is made of funding opportunities at the EU level in order to make a real impact.

The report also gives an overview of the EU funds that support investments in social housing and associated services such as infrastructure, provisions of services, building capacities and ensuring social and territorial cohesion in the area of social and affordable housing, from 2021 to 2027.

## ULB and FEPS Event: Affordable Housing (In)equality in the European Union



Panelists Sorcha Edwards, Michaela Kauer, László Andor and Ana Carla Pereira

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May the conference "Affordable Housing (In)equality in the European Union", organized by the Institut d'études européennes of the ULB in collaboration with the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), brought together different speakers to address issues surrounding affordable housing in the EU. The discussion focused on the current housing crisis, its drivers, and potential solutions. Key speakers included **Michaela Kauer**, director at the Brussels Office of the City of Vienna, **Sorcha Edwards**, General Secretary of Housing Europe, and **Ana Carla Pereira**, expert in the cabinet of the Commissioner Nicolas Schmit for Jobs and Social Rights, who shared insights from various perspectives.

During the first round of talk on the current housing situation and policy in the EU, **László Andor**, secretary-general of FEPS, highlighted the severe housing crisis exacerbated by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU is facing significant challenges in terms of housing affordability, particularly for young adults and low-income families. The crisis is further aggravated by market-oriented policies, lack of investment, and rapid urbanization. **Michaela Kauer** presented Vienna's successful approach to social housing. Vienna has a robust system with 220,000 housing units managed by cooperatives, serving over 500,000 people. A significant proportion of Vienna's population lives in rental housing. The city's historical approach, initiated after WWI by the Socialist Party, emphasizes social mix and affordability. Kauer stressed the need for direct intervention in the housing market to ensure fair prices and the inadequacy of market solutions alone to meet the needs of the population. Subsequently **Sorcha Edwards** discussed the impact of the housing crisis on vulnerable groups, including refugees and people with disabilities. She criticized the current approach to achieving climate goals in the housing sector, which has not been effective. The dramatic increase in residential property values and rising interest rates have made homeownership and mortgages unaffordable, hitting the middle class and low-income families the hardest. In her intervention **Ana Carla Pereira** identified three key drivers of the housing cost crisis: Increasing energy costs reduce real purchasing power, affecting both urban and rural areas; high renovation costs, driven by commitments to climate targets, are unaffordable for many families already struggling with high rents and mortgage payments; the rise of short-term rental platforms like Airbnb has reduced the availability of long-term rentals, particularly in urban centers, pushing residents to the outskirts and increasing living costs.

During the second round of talks on Policy and Regulatory Recommendations, **László Andor** questioned whether the housing crisis is more

of a regulation issue, investment issue, or something else, emphasizing the need for effective tools at the EU level to address the crisis. **Ana Carla Pereira** advocated for regulatory measures to broaden the definition of groups eligible for social housing aid and address the transparency and regulation of short-term rentals, **Michaela Kauer** called for revising state-aid rules and adopting a cooperative approach to energy renovations. Emphasized the need to view housing as a human right, not charity. Finally, **Sorcha Edwards** urged the EU to prioritize societal interests over political drivers and expand public, social, cooperative, and community housing. She highlighted innovative housing models like intergenerational developments and tenant democracy.

In the final round, speakers were asked to give examples of Good Practices. **Michaela Kauer** highlighted Vienna's gender-sensitive housing projects and initiatives to protect tenants with unlimited rental contracts. Sorcha Edwards shared successful housing models such as intergenerational buildings in Valencia and tenant-co-created estates in Eindhoven. Carla Pereira mentioned the EU Commission's toolkit of best practices, including multidisciplinary support teams in Palermo's social housing projects.

## EURHONET meeting in Lyon: Involving Our Tenants in Renovation



During the meeting “Involving our tenants in renovation” organized by the Sustainable

Construction and Social Integration Topic Group of the European Housing Network (Eurhonet), chaired by **Isaac Scaramella** and **Dragana Curovic**, held in Lyon on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of May, practitioners from different fields engaged in lively discussions and best practice sharing sessions on the various phases of an energy renovation project. The discussions focused on several key questions: how tenants' needs can be incorporated into designing a renovation with high sustainability goals, how the impact on tenants' lives can be minimized during the work phase while ensuring the quality of the works, and the best practices to ensure all tenants are fully informed about the works. Additionally, advice was shared on how people can maximize the benefits of their newly renovated homes following the renovation.

**Barbara Steenbergen**, Head of the Liaison Office to the EU of the International Union of Tenants (IUT), provided insights into the critical tenant/owner relationship during renovations. She highlighted how landlords often pass on renovation costs to tenants, risking displacement and unaffordability. The intervention underlined the importance of renovations for energy savings and the need for tenant involvement from the outset to ensure quality and affordability. She also emphasized that public funding should prioritize projects with significant tenant participation and include rent caps to prevent landlords from exploiting subsidies. The "split incentive" issue, where tenants bear costs while landlords benefit from increased property value, was a common concern. Insights on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) further highlighted the need to protect tenants from eviction due to post-renovation rent increases. Effective tenant involvement is essential, requiring early engagement, clear communication, and regular updates. Among the best practices, the European Responsible Housing Initiative offers valuable guidelines for integrating tenant perspectives into sustainable housing projects.

Additionally, **Dara Turnbull** from Housing Europe shared findings from the RE-SKIN Project, an initiative aimed at promoting energy-efficient building renovations across Europe. The project promotes energy-efficient building renovations in Europe by upgrading exterior facades. It aims to reduce energy

## Living conditions and quality of life: Becoming adults, young people in a post-pandemic world

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2024 Eurofound, which is an EU agency that provides knowledge to improve living and working conditions in Europe, published a report entitled “Becoming adults: Young people in a post-pandemic world”<sup>6</sup>.

The report explores the obstacles that young people face on their journey to independence, such as the rising cost of living and inability to move out of the parental home, in the context of the current labour market and housing situation and progress on the implementation of the EU’s reinforced Youth Guarantee.

Some of the key findings of the report show that young people who are less financially well off are less likely to be able to move out of the parental home, which in turn may put financial strain on the household. As a result, young people living with their parents are most likely to have difficulty making ends meet.

Moreover, mismatches between young people’s aspirations and their concrete plan are particularly common when it comes to housing. Increasingly, young people would buy a home but are mostly tenants. In addition, this report found that unfulfilled aspirations to move out of the parental home are associated

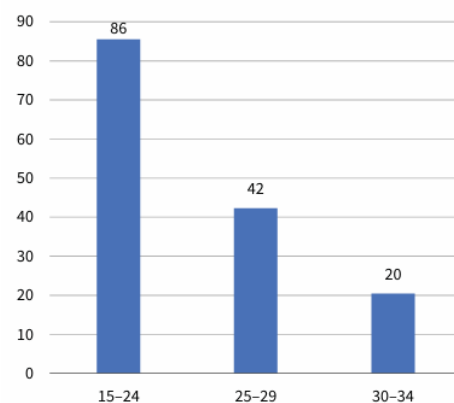
consumption, lower emissions, and enhance building sustainability through innovative technologies and materials. The project involves collaboration between researchers, industry partners, policymakers, and building owners to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient renovation practices.

with a higher likelihood of feeling excluded from society.

The current cost of living crisis and the housing crises experienced in many major European cities- have often been reported as having a greater economic impact on younger generations than on older groups (UNHCR, 2023). In fact, as income inequalities have trended upwards since the financial crisis of 2007-2008, young people have emerged as one of the increasingly vulnerable groups. (Chevalier, 2023)

Data from EU-SILC confirm that there is large variation across Member States in the proportion of young people who live with their parents. In general, the Nordic Member States have the lowest prevalence of young people living with their parents (31%, 35% and 43%, respectively, of 15- to 29-year-olds live with their parents according to EU-SILC data).

Figure 24: Young people living with their parents by age group, EU27, 2022 (%)



Source: Authors' calculations using EU-SILC microdata

<sup>6</sup> [Becoming adults: Young people in a post-pandemic world | European Foundation for the](#)

[Improvement of Living and Working Conditions \(europa.eu\)](#)

In contrast, in southern Member States, most young people aged 15–29 live in the parental home. The highest prevalence is in Malta (95%), Croatia (93%) and Italy (91%).

On average across the EU, 75% of those aged 15-29 live with their parents, but this ranges from 67% in densely populated areas to 82% in thinly and intermediately populated areas, possibly reflecting the availability of suitable housing and related cost implications.

In conclusion, young people living with their parents are more likely to have difficulties making ends meet and to be unable to afford unexpected expenses, suggesting that those from less well-off homes are less likely to be able to move out, which in turn may put additional financial strain on the intergenerational household. Among young people already in employment and aged 25-34, over half still live at home in several southern and eastern Member States. Nearly half of young people living with their parents would like to move out within a year, but only 28% actively plan to do so. The mismatch between young people's wishes and plans is particularly large when it comes to buying their own home.

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