



Report on the workshop “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in Europe and beyond”

13 December 2018

Bruseels, Belgium

Introduction

The workshop “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in Europe and beyond” was organized on 13 December 2018. During the workshop a range of issues was debated:

- (i) policy frameworks, methodologies and tools for implementation of SDG 11 "Sustainable cities and communities";
- (ii) policy indicators for sustainable housing and urban development at international, regional and local levels;
- (iii) roles of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies in policy monitoring;
- (iv) types of evidence for sustainable housing policies
- (v) collaborative data production and management
- (vi) contribution of the New Urban Agenda and the EC Urban Partnerships to policy-making for sustainable urban development with a focus on housing.

Opening remarks

- Ms Olga Zrihen, Chair of the CoR's ECON commission and vice-President of the Belgian Senate, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Committee of the Regions. She highlighted the Belgian context and her role in ECON Committee of the Committee of the Regions. She pointed out that South of Belgium being a specific context in the scale of the country with the rate of poverty and the rate of unemployment being high and the social housing being system limited to towns. She referred to, for instance, the ‘Kangaroo’ model’ of housing where young persons and young families live with elderly persons and provide them support; the collaborative housing models (Community Land Trusts). She also stressed that access to (decent quality and affordable) housing is pre-requisite for social cohesion and economic development, and the value added in having SGDs in all policy areas and that local and regional authorities play pivotal roles in delivering affordable housing – they are in contact in the citizens, in system of housing. She outlined selected issues in the field – that new housing must be energy efficient and environmentally friendly, and if delivered via PPP, it has to be in the interests of people.
- Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head, UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, welcomed the participants and delivered opening remarks. She outlined the role of the UNECE as an intergovernmental body and in sharing ideas and capacity-building towards better delivery of sustainable development goals by 56 UNECE member states. She pointed that the UNECE works on affordability of housing, a human dimension of housing, energy efficiency, People-first Public Private Partnership and data. It promotes integrated approach to housing, resilience to climate change and resource efficiency (e.g. in housing finance). Ms Roll referred to the Geneva Charter for affordable housing and that discussion on the role of data in crafting evidence-based housing policies is also of key interests to the UNECE. The UNECE develops various guidelines; to support member states in delivering SGDs. Without identifying the evidence, it is difficult to developed grounded and responsible housing policies;
- Mr. Christophe Lalande, Leader, Housing Unit, UN-Habitat, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the UN-Habitat. He acknowledged the value added in having SGDs in all policy areas, UN-Habitat’s collaboration with the UNECE on housing and a need to work more in-depth on data production and management. He stressed that UN-Habitat is the guardian for SDG11,

especially target 11.1 and that data is important in terms of policy development. The UN-Habitat has experience in working with both, developing countries, where it provides technical assistance. With regard to the guidelines and objective of the event, it was acknowledged that the guidelines supposed to provoke thought and the event is particularly important in terms of strengthening relationships with regional partners to further development partnerships. Lastly, he pointed out that housing is a main vector of social and economic inclusion in cities and regions and that recently the UN-Habitat has worked on such issues as the role of Airbnb in cities, challenges related to aging and migration.

Presentation on the work of the UNECE

- Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head, UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, delivered presentation on the work of the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit. She presented the key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities that were developed by UNECE and ITU as part of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Programme (U4SSC).

She highlighted the low level of data collection on the European national level and stressed the importance of evidence-based policies to connect the local, national and regional levels for joint work. Ms. Roll pointed to the role of the UNECE in working on the SDGs, especially in the context of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region, which took place in advance of the High-level political forum in New York. She emphasized that historically, the UNECE has been working on sustainable development and on housing, example of which are the Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management, which are national studies of housing and urban development processes in various countries and the purpose of which is to provides a set of reliable data that can be used in defining future directions of housing policies. The UNECE has also developed a range of guidelines and most notably has been working on the guidelines for evidence-based policies for sustainable urban development with a focus on housing, in tandem with the UN-Habitat. Lastly, she expressed her appreciation in efforts made by cities in production of urban and housing data.

- Ms. Agata Krause, Consultant for the UNECE/UN-Habitat, informed on the progress made by the UNECE and UN-Habitat on the preparation of the guidelines on policies for sustainable urban development with focus on housing. She underlined the importance of national capacities strengthening for development of evidence-based policies. The guidelines are aimed to assist national governments by elaborating a policy paper and guidelines, providing technical advice and promoting intersectional cooperation and building capacity on sustainable housing. She reflected on lessons learnt by studying selected examples of approaches to collection, management and use of data developed by the EU institutions, especially the Eurostat, the JRC, DG Regio and Committee of the Regions. Attention was paid to housing statistics collected and produced by the Eurostat, forecast approaches pursued by the JRC, the EU SDG indicator set and many others. She stressed that the mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a solid framework of indicators and statistical data. She also underlined the uncertainty on the place of housing in the range of the EU publications and the significance of harmonization of the global SDG agenda and EU regional policy.

Round table" Approaches to data collection and management in the context of SDG11, as well as the reflection on policy frameworks, tools, and methodologies in the EU"

- The round table discussed following issues: the Europe 2020 and the EU sustainable development indicators, qualitative methodologies and scenario analysis; Key Performance Indicators of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities; review of statistics and data on cities; Public Private Partnership in statistics.
- Ms. Daniela Grabmullerova, Ministry for Regional Development, Czech Republic; Vice Chair of Bureau of the UNECE Committee of Housing and Land Management, was moderating the discussion.
- Ms. Teodóra Brandmüller, Statistical Officer, Team leader of the Regional and Urban statistics, European Commission Eurostat, presented the information on the measuring of the sustainable urban housing in the EU. She noted that Eurostat is working closely with national EU statistics. She presented the overview of the different levels of SDG monitoring in the EU, as well as its policy background and SDG indicators set. According to the Eurostat data classification on cities, towns and suburbs, and rural areas, a significant progress was made on the monitoring of the overcrowding rate and the risk of poverty rate within the EU.
- Mr. Laurent Bontoux, Senior Expert, Joint Research Centre (JRC), delivered a presentation on the data collection methods. He noted the importance of following the evidence-based policies, as well as the understanding of its' drivers and decision makers. He expressed his opinion on the statistics which is to provide information on the past and stressed the need of anticipatory thinking, such as set of tools that could provide a systematic participatory process and look forward into the future of data collection. He presented the work of the JRC and its progress on the developing of tools to watch the megatrends that take place in the EU countries.
- Mr. Robert Hermans, Programme Director, CBS Urban Data Centre, delivered a statement on the using of data for smarter and sustainable cities. He introduced the work of the Urban Data Centre that contributed to the statistics production including regional and municipal levels, i.e. the creation of urban and rural data centers that provide data both for cities and small villages, caused by cities' lack of the access to national data and data expertise.

Round table "Opportunities and challenges for evidence-based policy-making in urban development and housing"

- The round table was organized as an interactive discussion focused on the following issues: the role of territorial impact assessment in policy monitoring in the EU; the role of case evidence in the State Aid for affordable housing; 'better regulation' and 'better knowledge' in the EU Urban agenda; achievements of the Urban Partnerships; localization of SDGs.
- Mr. Matteo Tarantino, Lecturer and Senior Research Associate, University of Geneva, was moderating the discussion.
- Ms. Wallis Goelen-Vandebroek, Head of Unit, Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development, DG REGIO, delivered information on the data collection in the frameworks of the EU Regional Policy. She underlined that the European Commission doesn't have responsibility for housing issues what makes it difficult when it comes to data collection. She introduced the with three main fields in the EU level policy cycle: economic analysis, impact

assessment and evaluation of implementation. In the field of economic analysis, the speaker presented the Cohesion Report (2017), State of EU Cities Report (2016) that are published in cooperation with Eurostat, Urban Europe and JRC's data platform. The field of impact analysis reflects the territorial impact assessment tool, developed in cooperation with ESPON, that is using quick stand web-tool, but still suffering because of the lack of data availability and adequate data. In the evaluation context, there is data under specific codes (codes that are used by governments to aggregate the measurement of performance). She noted a dynamic progress at all three levels. The field of urban development is controlled by instrument (introduced in 2018), which gives an access to 1000 integrated urban strategies. She informed on the programme for the post 2020 Regional Policy to move beyond national and regional level as data collection at sub-regional level was not practiced before. The goal is encouraging governments to invest in functional areas crossing the administrative boundaries.

- Ms. Michaela Kauer, Co-coordinator of the EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership, director of the "Vienna House" in Brussels, on behalf of the city of Vienna informed on the development of the Action Plan that is related to housing data. She urged the audience on the need in monitoring system for the cities. She informed that there is only partnership that delivered data on gender affordability of housing with is a huge layout for the EU. She noted that the gender also should be taken into account.
- Ms. Barbara Steenbergen, Head of liaison office of the International Union of Tenants (IUT) to the EU, presented the progress of work of the IUT. She underlined the significance of the cooperation between IUT and the EU and expressed the interest to establish cooperation activities with Eurostat. She concluded that data collection requires both government participation and private and market actors.
- Mr. Thomas Wobben, Director of the legislative work, Committee of the Regions, delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee of the Regions in which he noted the pressure of unified EU rules within the strong dynamical diversity all over the EU region. He underlined the need to put this diversity to the national level. In order to have a certain coherence there is also a need to have full geo reference, to strengthen the cooperation with global and European level and joint research centers, as well as to have a territorial impact assessment.
- Ms. Rachel Meghir, Director, and Mr. Luigi Cuna, Senior Evaluator, Evaluation Department, Council of Europe Development Bank, delivered a presentation on the work of the bank by giving the examples of evaluation projects developed for social housing assessment. The participants noted the two most important instruments for data collection: structured process that allows putting the data in analytical framework and methodology that involves the beneficiary population.
- Ms. Alice Pittini, Research coordinator, Housing Europe, endorsed the guidelines developed by Housing of Europe. She highlighted the significance of housing assessment with regard to the modern demographic trends by giving examples of countries that already conduct surveys such as Scotland that has a housing observatory in regions or cities with strong pressure on the market.

Closing remarks

- Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head, UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, expressed her gratitude to the organizers and participants of the workshop and encouraged the audience to continue the further cooperation on the issues of housing and urban development.
- Ms. Agata Krause, Consultant for the UNECE/UN-Habitat, expressed the interest to organize more activities on data collection in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, European Commission and Eurostat.
- Mr. Andres Jaadla, CoR member, Councillor of the city of Rakvere, Estonia, Board member of Housing Europe, expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Committee of the Regions and encouraged the participants to continue the cooperation with the UNECE and UN-Habitat in the forthcoming year.