



Side event

Addressing housing affordability issues in the UNECE Region in the context of economic, financial and migration crises: challenges and good practices

Date: 17 March 2016

Time: 17:30 to 19:00

Venue: Meeting Hall IV, Prague Congress Center

Language: English

Background and objectives

According to the UNECE report on, "[Social Housing in UNECE Region](#)" (2015), the economic downturn and recession in Europe had a critical impact on the housing sector: over 100 million people in the UNECE region are housing cost overburdened. As a result of the crises, the social and affordable housing sector faces two challenges at the moment: increased need and reduced funds. This social housing study proposed that current challenges are real problems but also opportunities for the governments to re-examine the sector and adjust it to the new dynamics of the housing market. The ongoing influx of migrants and refugees from Syria and other conflict zones to Europe has exacerbated the situation. According to a report of the International Monetary Fund (2016), the inflow of refugees puts further pressure on the market for affordable housing and will require adjustments in national housing policies in order to support provisions for adequate housing as well as integration of migrants in the countries' labour markets.

The need for adjusting national policies for the provision of affordable adequate housing has been discussed in different fora by the governments, housing providers, other stakeholders, not the least during annual sessions of the intergovernmental UNECE Committee of Housing and Land Management (CHLM), which joins high-level officials responsible for housing and land management in 56 countries in the "Global North". The Committee at its annual meeting in 2014 agreed on the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, a non-legally binding document that aims to support governments of member States in their efforts to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all. By doing that, countries expressed their political will to continue working on the further development and adjustment of the national housing policies.

In December 2015, the CHLM at its seventy-sixth session decided to prepare, in cooperation with partner organizations, a study on how countries and cities in the UNECE region have tackled the economic and financial crises after 2008, and how they are addressing the current migration crisis in terms of the provision of affordable housing. The study would focus on experiences so far and will document best practices. The study will be implemented jointly by UN with the involvement of Pan-European housing networks.

The objective of this side event is to discuss the preparation of the study on affordable housing in the context of economic, financial and migration crisis. This side event is organised by the [UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management](#) and its Real Estate Market Advisory Group in cooperation with the [UN-Habitat Housing Unit](#), the Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues section of the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR), [Housing Europe](#): the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing and the [International Union of Tenants](#).

For more information on the event, please contact:

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Draft agenda – version 14 March 2016

17 March in Meeting Hall IV	
17:30 – 19:00	<p>OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Elena Szolgayová, Chair of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (Slovakia)</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Christian Friis Bach</i>, Executive Secretary, UNECE</p>
	<p>General informations on and proposed methodology for the study</p> <p>— <i>Ms. Gulnara Roll</i>, Head, Housing and Land Management Unit, UNECE</p> <p>— <i>Ms. Orna Rosenfeld</i>, Sciences Po – L’institut d’études politiques, Paris</p>
	<p>Comments by cities and international organisations</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Bahram Ghazi</i>, Office of Higher Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR</p> <p>— <i>Ms. Christian Schantl</i>, Vienna’s Housing Company, City of Vienna (Austria)</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Julien Dijol</i>, Housing Europe Secretariat</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Magnus Hammar</i>, Secretary General, International Union of Tenants</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Gerry Muscat</i>, Head of Division, Regional and Urban Development Division, Projects Directorate, European Investment Bank</p> <p>— <i>Mr. Luigi Cuna</i>, Evaluator, Evaluation Department, Council of Europe Development Bank</p> <p>— <i>Ms. Fernanda Lonardonì</i>, Housing Unit, UN-Habitat</p>
	<p>CONCLUSIONS</p> <p><i>Ms. Elena Szolgayova</i>, Chair of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (Slovakia)</p>