



Implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing

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Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing

Main purpose: to ensure the access to decent, affordable and healthy housing in the ECE region

Scope: to improve the sustainability of housing in the ECE region through effective policies and actions at all levels, supported by international cooperation





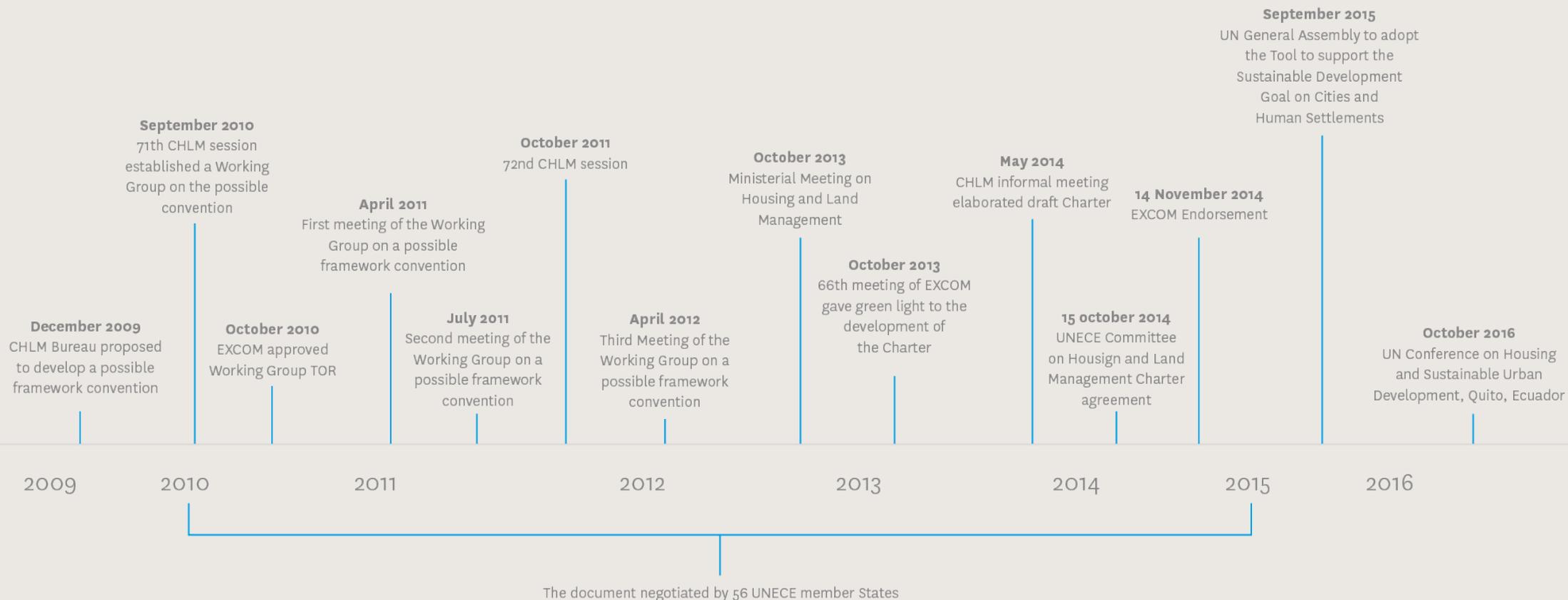
Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing

Timeline

- The document negotiated by 56 UNECE member States in 2009 – 2015
- UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management agreed on the Charter on 15 October 2014
- UNECE endorsed the Charter on 16 April 2015



THE GENEVA UN CHARTER ON SUSTAINABLE HOUSING





Connection to other international processes

- A tool to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal on Cities and Human Settlements that the UN General Assembly is expected to adopt in September 2015
- The Charter is the UNECE contribution to the **Habitat III** (The UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, October 2016, Quito, Ecuador)





Long term focus of the Charter implementation

This Charter is a non legally binding instrument. It presents a form of “soft law”.

The Charter contains general principles, which will continue to be relevant in years to come whereas a legally binding agreement risks to lose touch with changing needs.





Case Example of a non-legally binding instrument: Magna Carta (1215)

The document drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1215 that set out rights which King John of England agreed to.

In 1297, that the Magna Carta was granted a statutory basis under Edward I. Magna Carta was not legally enforceable and did not pose obligations upon the state. Yet, its impact was that it served as a catalyst for civil rights.





Case Example of a non-legally binding instrument: Magna Carta (1215)

Today it is regarded as being the first document that constituted the uncodified constitution of the United Kingdom.

The main rights which were proposed in the Magna Carta were later incorporated into legislation to make them legally binding.





Flexibility of the instrument

Flexible and allows member States to tailor their policies in line with their current capabilities, thereby avoiding a situation where the provisions of an agreement are made to accommodate all concerned parties.

This lead to more effective and more sustainable long term implementation.





How can member States implement the Charter?

Implementation takes place through the national laws, strategies, action plans etc. established in the specific national context.

It will remain to the member States discretion to implement any measures that are to achieve the goals set out in the Charter.





Recommendations for the implementation

National level

- Translate the Charter and its promotional materials (Power Point presentation, a poster) into national languages. Send copies of translated Charter documents to the secretariat for uploading to the website at <http://www.unece.org/housing/charter.html>
- Organise national and local meetings to disseminate information on the Charter
- Communicate: articles in journals, newspapers, newsletters; social media etc.
- Implement through national regulatory framework





Recommendations for the implementation

UNECE level

- Establish a network of **centres of excellence for the implementation of the Charter in cooperation with interested countries, international or national organisations** to conduct:
 - Dissemination of the information on the Charter and its principles
 - Advisory services
 - Studies on best practices
 - Capacity building at national and local levels
 - Networking including cities, other stakeholders





Recommendations for the implementation

Possible next steps

Interest to host centers of excellence was expressed by the **Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus** (Letter of 2 December 2015) and **Estonian Union of Co-operative Homeowner Associations** (Letter of 3 December 2015)

Invite several more nominations possibly from different subregions.





Recommendations for the implementation

Possible next steps

- Prepare a concise **Guide**, including **Terms of Reference of and a procedure for the establishment of Centres of Excellence**
- Establish a network of Centers of Excellence
- Prepare additional dissemination materials (posters, a postcard, USB sticks, etc.; printing the Charter in different languages)
- Organise a regular survey of member States on the implementation

Secretariat invites in-kind expert or financial support for the preparation of the guide and dissemination materials





Recommendations for the implementation

UNECE level

Planned international events to discuss the implementation of the Charter:

- Side event at European Habitat?
- A workshop in Copenhagen (tbc)
- A joint workshop with Housing Europe in Geneva, September 2016
- A high-level workshop in Minsk, November 2016
- A workshop in Vienna, 2017 (with City of Vienna)

Use existing structures to disseminate information – national Aarhus Centers, partner organisations

