

## **Update of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2030 in the Czech Republic (Marie Mohylová)**

Madame Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank our colleagues from San Marino for organizing this Committee's session and also for inviting me to this panel aimed at the implementation of the goals of the Regional Action Plan 2030. As we all know it was adopted by UNECE Ministers last year. It is my pleasure to be here and to share experience with you.

In the Czech Republic, the current most urgent issues are housing affordability and housing expenditures on energy. Both these challenges have been deeply influenced by the pan-European geopolitical and economic situation. Therefore, the implementation of the objectives of the UNECE Regional Action Plan is aimed mainly to shaping housing systems generating adequate and affordable housing – it means Policy Area B – target B3.2.2. in particular.

I would like to stress that more than 440 thousands Ukrainian refugees have been granted temporary protection since February this year so far in the Czech Republic. We have the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe – this figure represents more than 4% of the whole Czech population. In the capital city of Prague, it is an increase by more than 8% of the Prague population. It is obvious that this situation has an extremely strong impact on the housing market.

The Czech Republic uses the Regional Action Plan together with other long term strategies, like the Housing Strategy 2021+ and Strategy of Regional Development, Urban Development Policy, European National Program of Reforms, etc.

I mustn't forget to mention #Housing2030 initiative, and especially its outcome, where you can find not just the best practise of different countries and useful links, but also politically correct rating of different tools.

We also value the support of networks of cities, agencies and stakeholders, which help to shape housing systems that generate access to adequate and affordable housing. The great challenge is an Act on Social Housing which should offer the support of social work and housing at the same time with financial support from the central government for investments and for covering the running costs of the system. "

As regards housing for Ukrainian refugees, the Czech government has approved the strategic document outlining the medium and long-term priorities to address all the challenges relating to the situation. For example, a new subsidy programme has been launched to finance the repair and renovation of apartments and non-residential premises to become quickly habitable.

We also understand that good planning system, including spatial planning, is necessary condition for delivering healthy liveable cities and other municipalities in functional areas. The challenge is to promote compact city model with efficiently distributed economic activities, social infrastructure and services, delivering affordable housing and preventing the urban sprawl.

Reasonable solution is the redevelopment of brownfields, which are located near the city centres or with good transport connectivity. It also gives priority to housing settlements with integrated transport systems and use of green infrastructure.

The pandemic, followed by the immigration wave and growing energy prices, has shown that it is not easy to access a safe and affordable home, which is properly or sufficiently heated, where you can live, work, learn or relax.

European countries decided to stimulate the social and economic recovery by using Recovery and Resilience Facility. National Recovery plan of the Czech Republic is focused on green and digital transition, because the technological changes are likely to have a significant impact on Czech economy. The required reforms should ensure that changes remain sustainable and effective.

One of the measures, which is run by the Ministry of Regional Development, is Technological demonstration projects for cities and regions, which supports investing in very-high-capacity and 5G networks.

Second component is focused on acceleration and digitalisation of the building process. The aim of the component is to simplify the process of granting construction permits, and digitalisation of building management and spatial planning. The institutional reform and its digitalisation shall speed up building procedures and existing data shall be migrated to the central information system. Provided data shall be shared with other public administration systems.

The last component is "brownfield revitalisation" of former industrial or unused sites in urban areas with the goal to improve energy efficiency of buildings and better its use without affecting agricultural land.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we all face unknown future, unexpected development and enormous risks in all spheres of our lives. Nevertheless, I believe that to continue the pan-European dialog is a key for overcoming hard times and that looking for adequate solutions can help us to face all the challenges.

Thanks for the floor.