



April 2017

EU housing partnership guidance paper state aid ♦♦♦ ECJ re-opens „Dutch case“

♦♦♦ EU energy council ♦♦♦ BEUC/IUT publication solar self-consumption

Guidance paper on EU regulation issued by EU housing partnership

The EU Urban Agenda partnership for housing scored a breakthrough in the discussions on the issue of state aid and the target group for social housing at its meeting on 22 and 23 March. In their "Guidance paper on EU regulation and public support for housing", the pitfalls of the state aid regulation are analysed as well as the legal compliance of public funding for social housing with EU law. At the same time the paper delivers one of the strategic objectives of partnership, better regulation, by making proposals for a simplification of existing EU rules to services of general economic interest (SGEI) and the use of structural and investment funds. An internal working group of the EU partnership, which includes i.a. the Dutch housing corporations, the city of Vienna and the IUT Brussels has drafted the paper and after intensive discussions with the EU Commission (DGs REGIO, ENER, EMPL, COMP); experts from the EU Member States Slovakia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands; experts from the cities of Riga, Poznan, Lisbon, the Scottish cities alliance and experts of Housing Europe, URBACT and the European Investment Bank the paper was adopted at the meeting in Brussels. IUT was represented by its President Sven Bergenstråhle. IUT Brussels will inform about the further procedure.



ECJ remits complaint of the Dutch housing corporations back to General Court

The "Dutch case" is re-opened again since March 15. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) remitted the complaint against the SGEI decision to the General Court (EGC).¹ Core of the complaint is that the EU Commission has exceeded its competence with the narrow target group definition of social housing in the Netherlands.

Whilst social housing in the Netherlands was previously open for broad parts of the population, as a result of the "Dutch case" an income limit of 33,000 euros per household was imposed.

1

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=188911&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=467082>

This action followed the EU commissions' definition that access to social housing should be restricted to socially disadvantaged groups. The procedure is of relevance to all EU Member States because the EU Commission aims to align the definition of the target group in the context of the exemption from notification.

Energy council debates the clean energy package

For the first time the "clean energy for all Europeans" package was debated in the Council of the EU.² The package includes i.a. the revision of the directives on energy performance of buildings, energy efficiency and renewable energies. In the [conclusions](#) it is stated that many Member States want the issue of energy poverty to be dealt in the area of social policy.

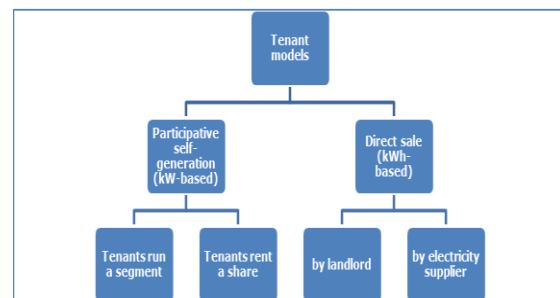
However, the Commission justifies its proposals that just energy savings in the housing stock will enable households to escape the energy poverty. Compared to the previous directive the social dimension of energy efficiency shall be stressed. The Council preferred the 27% indicative target for energy efficiency compared to the mandatory 30% by 2030. The long-term rehabilitation strategies for the building stock were considered as too unclear and demanding. The newly established IUT energy expert group, guided by IUT Vice President Jan Laurier, will deal with the clean energy package.

²

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2017/02/27/>

BEUC/IUT publish study on solar self-consumption for tenants

On March 9, the umbrella organization of European consumer organisations BEUC and the IUT presented a joint study on tenant's access to solar self-consumption at the EU Parliament.³ In the new "clean energy for all Europeans" package of the EU Commission, consumers shall be in the centre of the Energy Union and take advantage of new technologies and future energy markets. In their publication BEUC and IUT criticize that so far only homeowners will benefit from the funding models for solar energy, while tenants stay aside. BEUC and IUT introduce the different viable models for tenant solar self-consumption and claim for a strengthening of social aspects in the Energy Union and the energy transition.



Tenant models assessed

³

http://www.iut.nu/EU/Energy/BEUC_%20IUT_solar_self_consumption_March2017.pdf

Housing Europe: a fair energy transition is centred on residents

The role of residents in the energy-efficient modernisation of the housing stock has been discussed in a conference of Housing Europe, the European federation of social housing providers at the house of Dutch provinces in Brussels on March 8.⁴ Housing companies from various EU Member States presented publicly funded projects that are outstanding in relation to tenant participation and cost-efficiency for tenants and landlords as well.



Barbara Steenbergen, head of the Brussels IUT office, presented i.a. the Dutch model, which also applies to the private housing sector. In houses with more than 10 units, 70% of the tenants must agree to the modernisation, otherwise works cannot be performed. Together with the housing cost guarantee a strong model of tenant participation.

⁴ <https://storify.com/HousingEurope/getting-our-homes-furute-ready>

International Social Housing Festival in Amsterdam

June 13-21, the International Social housing festival is held in Amsterdam.⁵ The city of Amsterdam, the Dutch housing corporations, universities and NGOs, including the Dutch Woonbond and the tenants' association of Amsterdam, will present a varied programme, which is grouped around the museum 'Het Schip', a famous social housing complex in the architectural style of the Amsterdam school.



„Het Schip“, social housing for 102 families in the heart of Amsterdam

"Affordable housing now- better communities tomorrow" is the motto.

Welkom in Amsterdam!

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⁵ <https://socialhousingfestival.com/>