



International Union of Tenants

Association Internationale des Locataires

*Consultative status with UN Economic and Social Council
Participatory Status with the Council of Europe*

www.iut.nu

Wrap up from IUT Brussels Liaison office, Dec. 2008

Winter 2008 was a turning point for housing and energy policy on EU-level.

1) Use of Renewable Energy in Housing- The EU climate and energy-efficiency package

December 17, 2008 after only 11 months of negotiations, the European institutions decided on the climate and energy package. IUT concentrated on the renewable energy directive which deals with housing. Though the EU council rejected the obligation to fix minimum requirements of renewable energy when refurbishing or constructing a house, Member States will have to change their national building regulations to increase the use of renewable energy in the building sector.

The IUT amendment was to insert a legislative link between renewable energy and energy efficiency in order to reduce the costs for tenants. We have this link in Art. 13, paragraph 4, clause 2.

Unfortunately the EU-council changed it to a weak "may" condition- but anyhow we got the link to move on further with national legislation.

The second IUT amendment was to insert existing buildings. We have them in - with a "shall" condition and a deadline in 2015 (Art. 13, paragraph 4, clause 3).

In his speech at the EU-parliament last Wednesday Claude Turmes MEP already announced that renewable energy standards for housing will be on the agenda again when deciding the new Energy Performance Buildings Directive (EPBD). We expect a first reading in April 2009.

2) The Housing Ministers Meeting in Marseille, November 24, 2009, the EU-Economic Recovery Plan and the opening of the structural funds for housing

The first signs of a major change in the structural funds were announced by Commissioner Danuta Hübner at the housing ministers meeting when she claimed for strategies to guarantee decent and energy- efficient housing to fight social exclusion and energy-poverty. She underlined that there is an impact of EU policies on national housing policies and that the EU commission has an eye on the costs of poor housing and a lack of housing.

Two days later, the president of the EU-Commission Barroso stated in his economic recovery plan that the structural funds will be opened for housing in all Member States (EU-27). Financing is concentrated on energy-efficient refurbishment and especially targeted to low-income households. At the moment, the working groups of the EU-council negotiate with the Member States which have to re-programme their national plans for the use of the structural funds money in the period 2007-2013. In clear words: money dedicated to traffic projects or trade and innovation projects has to be redirected to housing- by the civil servants. The tenant unions should claim that actively from their housing ministries. The opening of the funds will be most probably adopted by the EU-parliament in March. We expect the first money available in April 2009.

**IUT and the national tenant unions started new policies for a more social Europe.
Thank you all for your political support and commitment in 2008.
Looking forward to the next round in 2009- it's election year!**

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