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# International Union of Tenants

## Association Internationale des Locataires

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## **IUT statement for the International Tenants' Day, October 6 2008**

### **Promoting affordable housing is a key factor**

**On the occasion of the International Tenants' Day, October 6**, the International Union of Tenants will convene an open seminar in the European Parliament in Brussels. Members of the European Parliament, experts as well as representatives from a wide range of European housing NGO:s will stress the necessity for a new deal in housing, to increase the output of affordable housing in Europe.

Increasing house prices, rents and cost of living in general make life hard to live for many city residents. According to ECA International residential rents in Mumbai India increased by 21 % from May 2007 to May 2008 and in Beijing rents rose by 18 % in 2007. At the same time house prices rose by almost 50 % in Sofia Bulgaria, by 33 % in Poland and 11 % in Sweden.

The biggest rental increases in Europe in 2007 occurred in Moscow, up by 29 %. In Bucharest Romania rents went up by 23 %. Hong Kong has had rent increases of 22 percent the same year and has the world's priciest apartment rents, with the lease for a three-bedroom unit costing more than US\$ 9,700 on average a month.

London rents were at their highest for 10 years in December 2007 reported a City estate agent. Key public sector workers are being frozen out of the housing market in two-thirds of the towns and cities of Britain after prices have doubled in five years. The Halifax bank found the asking price for a house in 339 of 519 towns surveyed was unaffordable for police officers, ambulance staff, firemen, nurses and teachers. In 2001, the figure was 124.

In Australia 93 % of Sydney's key workers have been priced out of the city shows a report this year. The findings also show housing prices have risen by two-thirds across Australia since 2002. The average income has increased by less than half that amount over the same time.

Reports from many states and cities around the world say that they are having difficulties in recruiting key workers such as school teachers, firemen, police, nurses etc, because of unaffordable housing costs. Even the Market has reacted to this intolerable situation, as lack of housing leads to a slow down in economy.

Several cities around the world are developing schemes for new affordable housing particularly aimed at workers in the public and service sectors. But the construction is slow and the flats are too few. It is not enough with a few hundred here and another hundred there.

Hundreds of thousands of people are waiting for affordable and decent housing in Europe, near to where the job opportunities are. They are tired of getting up by four or five in the morning to make it to work! All bread- winners want to be back home in time for dinner and to say good night to their children - something of a human right too. Our politicians want us, the workforce, to be "flexible", but they have to give us the possibilities!

/Magnus Hammar/  
Secretary General