

IUT 2011; *Affordable rental homes for the young!*

Delayed adulthood as a social phenomenon produced by housing conditions is a problem that employment and social policies should take seriously, in terms of the potential negative effects it can have on family life, fertility, labour market mobility and employment rates.

In the EU, in 2008, 51 million, or 46 %, of all young adults aged 18-34 still lived with at least one of their parents (see figure). The share of young adults, 18-34, living with their parent(s) varies from 20 % or less in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, to 60 % or more in Bulgaria, Slovenia and Slovakia. It exceeds 50 % in 16 Member States.

In France, 48 % of young people aged 18-30 lived at home, and in Spain 78 %. Contrary to the Danes (20 %) and the British (21%), the Spaniards do not consider it a major problem. In Spain most people will not leave home before they have finished university. (Cecilia van de Velde, 2009)

Similarly, a report from *First European Quality of Life Survey: Social dimensions of housing (2006)*, compares young people age 18-24 in the EU 25. In Italy, Portugal and Spain, only 3-8 % of young adults age 18-24 lived independently, while in Sweden and Finland 62 % lived independently, followed by Denmark 59 %, Germany 48 % and the UK 46 %.

In Central and Eastern Europe a general shortage of affordable housing, combined with tradition and culture, has resulted in a situation where many young adults, 18-34, stay with their parents. In Slovakia only 4 % lived on their own in 2008, in Poland 5 % and in Czech Republic 15 %. Consequences may be the effects this can have on their professional careers, on the establishment of their own way of life, and delayed childbirth

The median age at which young men left their parental home in 2005 varies from around 21 in Denmark and Finland to 30-31 in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy and 32 in Croatia. For women, the average age is lower in all countries, varying from 20 in Denmark and Finland to 27-28 in Greece, Spain, Italy, and Slovenia.

In the USA, 25% of males aged 18-30 still lived with their parents, according to the *World Development Report 2007*. A study by the *National Center for Children in Poverty* showed that in 2009 53 % of Americans between 18 and 24 were living at home, compared with 47 % in 1970. Likewise, the Center reports that young adults in the US are also delaying marriage and starting a family. In 1970, the median age for a first marriage was 21 for women and 23 for men, compared to 26 for women and 28 for men in 2009.

In Canada, 58 % more young adults, 20-29, lived with their parents in 2006 compared to 1981, from 27,5 % to 43,5 %. (Statistics Canada 2006)

‘Boomerang kids’, is a term in Canada that describes an adult child who has left home at some point in the past to live on their own and has returned to live in the parental home. This return can be due to completed studies, divorce, or unemployment - or lack of affordable housing. In 2001, almost 25 % of all adult children living with parent(s) were boomerang kids in Canada.

In Australia the trend is similar. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that in 2006, 23 % of Australians aged 20-34 years were living at home with their parents, compared with 19 % in 1986. For men aged 18-34 years in 2006-07, the median age of first leaving home was 21 years, and for women around 20. A report from AIHW, *Young People and Children in Social Housing (2010)*, also said that three out of four young Australians in social housing lived in single parent families.

Affordable and sound rental housing, combined with the flexibility, is what many young adults prioritize when asked about their housing expectations and desires. IUT urges all its members and associates to raise the issue of young adults and lack of affordable rental housing with their national and local decision- and policy makers.

And, do not forget to mark October 3, International Tenants’ Day, in your calendars!

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