

November 2002

**Name in Slovenian – Združenje najemnikov Slovenije (ZNS)**

**Name in English – The Association of Tenants of the Republic of Slovenia (ATS)**

The Association of Tenants of the Republic of Slovenia was established ten years ago. It includes 800 members but the number is expected to grow.

In the transitional period in Eastern European countries the security of tenure is far from a firmly established notion. Once huge public housing sector was privatized and brought about the situation that most people now live in dwellings they own.

The remaining minority of tenants, however, have lost a great deal of power and support to prove how important the security of tenure is, not only today but also in forthcoming years. The Association of Tenants of the Republic of Slovenia is the only non-government organization dealing with this issue in the country. We have been operating for a decade, endeavouring to ensure security of tenure and protect the rights and interests of the tenants. Until recently we functioned as the Association of Sitting Tenants in Restituted Dwellings, as this issue still remains one of the most urgent problems of Slovenian transition and the housing policy. It concerns the tenants who acquired the highly protected right to use the dwellings in the public sector. As a result of privatisation and restitution, and against their will, they were forced to accept the position of leaseholders in the private sector which provides only minimal and insufficient legal protection. Slovenia may well be one of the most successful candidates for the EU membership but it pays absolutely no attention to the issues of the tenants. Thus the security of tenure is a total enigma to our authorities as well as to the housing policy. Currently the Republic of Slovenia is preparing a new Housing Act which very loosely and superficially arranges leaseholds, taking us another step further away from the developed world. ATS now functions on behalf of all tenants as it is clear that tenants' security has been put in jeopardy. We are dismayed by the fact that, despite a highly declared protection of human rights and security of tenure at the international and European level, the European Union shows no interest in the housing problem in the EU candidate countries. Our IUT membership has given us much enthusiasm and encouragement to have a new opportunity to alert and expose the ignored problems in the transitional countries. We sincerely hope to be able to contribute to achieving the goals of this global organization at home and abroad.

Tanja Šarec

President of the Executive Committee of the Association of Tenants of Slovenia