



June 2017

◆◆◆ International conferences on social and affordable housing ◆◆◆
IUT board debates the EU energy package and the pillar of social rights
◆◆◆ IUT at the German Tenant's Day 2017 ◆◆◆

International Social Housing Festival

Amsterdam was the venue of the first International Social Housing Festival June 13-21. Centred along the museum for social housing, "Het Schip", a variety of workshops, conferences and site visits was offered to the participants.¹ The Netherlands are world leader in social housing, 30% of all dwellings are social housing. In Amsterdam this share is 57%, with a maximum rent of 711 Euro. According to the alderman for housing, Laurens Ivens, 50.000 new social housing units will be built until 2025 because social housing is still scarce. 54% of Amsterdam's citizens have the right to access social housing. The festival highlights the original idea of good and affordable housing for broad parts of the population, the Dutch "Volkshuisvesting", also including the active participation of tenants. Whereas everywhere in Europe market forces rule the housing markets, the social housing festival wants to reinforce the idea of not-for-profit housing and empowerment of residents in front of an international expert audience.

As part of the festival program, the European Federation for Living, EurHoNet and IUT invited for a workshop on the inclusion of migrants and refugees, June 15.²

Amongst the best practices the winner of the European Responsible Housing Awards 2016 in the category human resources, the GEWO BAG Berlin, presented the vocational training project for refugees.



Martina Heger, GEWO BAG

In the afternoon the workshop participants visited the „Boost“-Centre³ in Amsterdam East: A place to learn and work for refugees and neighbours which is initiated and supported by volunteers.

¹ <https://socialhousingfestival.com/about/>

² <https://socialhousingfestival.com/events/best-practices-inclusiveness-migration-refugee-housing-efl-iut/>

³ <http://gastvrijooost.amsterdam/>



Boost Amsterdam, with **Susanne Bauer**, housing department City of Vienna (back row, left), **Karin Ramser**, Vice director of “Wiener Wohnen” (4th left) and **Lenka Tarabová** (Czech union of tenants, front row, left) ©Salar Ashari

In the meantime, Boost became the meeting spot for the entire quarter. The idea behind Boost: refugees are not only trainees, but also trainers. Language courses, computer lessons, sports, photography, arts or cooking together-exchange and learning together at level playing field is the key.



Trainers and trainees at Boost-Amsterdam, together with **Lenka Tarabová** and **Barbara Steenbergen** © Salar Ashari, Boost

Housing Europe, the European Federation of of public, cooperative and social housing, invited for its general assembly during the festival. Successor of the leaving president **Marc Calon** from the Netherlands is **Cédric**

Van Styvendael, director of the Lyon Housing Association Est Metropole Habitat.

Also the Dutch IUT member Woonbond and the Amsterdam tenant association were represented at the festival and organized workshops i.a. on tenant participation and the worrying tendency to short term rent contracts.



IUT-President **Sven Bergensträhle** (bottom right) at the Housing Europe general assembly. ©Vera van den Duivenvoorden

EU partnership for housing in Amsterdam

The housing corporations Eigen Haard and Rochdale were the hosts of the Amsterdam meeting of the EU housing partnership June 14/15. In the focus were two presentations of scientific researches in the old and new EU-member states, introduced by **Jim Hayton** (Scottish Cities Alliance, Glasgow) and **Josze Hegedüs** (Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest). IUT was represented by **Sven Bergensträhle** (President), **Lenka Tarabová** (Czech union of tenants) und **Barbara Steenbergen** (Head of EU office).

Whereas a big number of Western member states would opt more and more for not-for profit and cooperative solutions to fight the

enormous housing shortages in the affordable sector, this is not the case in the new member states. Based on the history, cooperative solutions have a low acceptance.

Elena Szolgayova, chair of the partnership and director of the housing ministry of Slovakia, pointed on the necessity to find tailor-made solutions for the new member states. The partnership will develop a toolkit for best practices and draft policy transfer recommendations. In general all participants underlined the need to channel EU-funding to the level of cities- for the local social and public housing providers.

Kick-off IUT working group „general housing policy“

The first meeting of the new IUT working group “general housing policy” took place in the Headquarter of the Dutch Woonbond in Amsterdam, June 13. According to the new working structure, two internal working groups will formulate the general policy line and legislative amendments. The IUT housing working group consists of participants from the tenants unions of Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. First result is the drafting of focal points for the work plan 2017/2018. Participants underlined the necessity to find European solutions for national problems. Problematic are the increasing demands of the EU for energy efficient renovations, the bias towards market oriented solutions and the missing accessibility of EU funding to key actors in the housing sector, which are channelled towards member states level, but not to local actors. Furthermore, the European pillar of social rights needs to be redrafted as the definition of the target group for social housing must be extended. The results of the working group will feed in the

EU housing partnership. Next meeting is in September at the IUT office in Brussels.

IUT board meeting in Brussels, 27/28 April

The EU-representation of Rhineland-Palatinate, represented by its director **Pia Wenningmann**, hosted the IUT board meeting April 27/28

The new “clean energy package” of the EU and the EC communication on the European pillar of social rights, published April 26, were the controversial and highly topical themes discussed. The representatives of the European commission, **Raquel Cortes-Herrera** and **Niels Ladefoged** explained in detail the legislative proposals and took part in a straightforward and frank exchange of ideas with the IUT board members. The Dutch MEP **Agnes Jongerius** reported about the high-level political meetings with European commission and EU council on the pillar of social rights. She invited the tenant’s representatives to address their national governments in order to remedy the housing part of the pillar. The IUT board decided on the respective article 19, amending it to ensure protection from forced evictions for everybody as well as to enlarge the target group for social and affordable housing. Internal issues discussed: the new IUT statutes, the new IUT working- and governance structure with two working groups, „general housing policy“ and „energy“, as well as the farewell to our leaving IUT secretary general, **Magnus Hammar** from Sweden.



The IUT-board in Brussels, in the centre secretary general **Magnus Hammar**

German Tenant's Day 2017 in Magdeburg

Elke Hanel-Torsch, director of the tenant union of Austria and Vienna, highlighted the relevant points of the Austrian and Viennese housing market in front of the 600 delegates and guests of the 67. "Deutscher Mietertag 2017" in Magdeburg, June 8-10.



Elke Hanel Torsch, MVÖ, © Bernd Bohlen

Social housing has a long historical tradition in Vienna and contributes to the fact that rents-in comparison with other European capitals-are relatively moderate. The average rent in social housing is 3 €/m² excluding service costs, in new rental contracts with the best equipment category A the price is 5.58 €/m². In cooperative housing, the average rent is 5.50 € including service costs. In the private,

non-subsidized rental sector the prices range is 10-20 €/m². The provision of social and subsidized housing has a price-cutting effect on the entire rental market. According to **Elke Hanel-Torsch**, the major challenge is to guarantee the affordability of housing in the way the income and rents are synchronized. Although the rent prices are raised by 17%, the household income just increased by 6%. An active housing policy has direct impact on the rent prices and increases the possibilities for low- and middle income households to find affordable housing.

The president and the director of the Deutscher Mieterbund, **Franz-Georg Rips** and **Lukas Siebenkotten**, presented and debated the lead motion of the Mietertag, claiming for a European investment- and social pact for a new housing policy in Germany which was accepted by the general assembly.

In the public part of the assembly, several government representatives of the federal state, the land Sachsen-Anhalt and the city of Magdeburg outlined the future policy challenges for the German housing policy. One major issue is the malfunctioning of the rent brake, which is undermined by the landlords as there are several legislative loopholes. The German government's position is too weak as they cannot guarantee the enforcement of the rent brake. **Franz-Georg Rips** appealed to the officials to come into action- poverty is rapidly growing in Germany, 15% of the population has no access to affordable housing anymore. In a witty and vivid panel debate with the representatives of parties CDU, SPD, Grüne and Linke, **Lukas Siebenkotten** confronted the politicians with the gap between the election promises and the reality for tenants in Germany.



DMB-director **Lukas Siebenkotten** and the panellists

A better functioning rent brake, the necessary steps to stop gentrification and “renovictions” and the need to change the German constitution in order to maintain the financing of social housing both by the federal state and the Länder, were debated under the leitmotiv “for a new social housing policy in Germany”.



The IUT delegation in Magdeburg: **Elke Hanel –Torsch** and **Marisa Perchtold**, MVÖ, **Milan Taraba** and **Vera Mindlová**, Czech Union of Tenants, **Barbara Steenbergen**, IUT Brussels with **Reiner Wild**, DMB-board member

Barcelona invites to an international congress for social housing

In the course of the Spanish building fair „Construmat“, the city of Barcelona invited to an international congress for social housing May 23.⁴

Experts from various European countries evaluated the newest developments in legislation and financing of housing. IUT was represented by **Barbara Steenbergen**, who gave a lecture on the German social rent law and participated in the panel debate. Following the congress, bilateral meetings with the head of the newly established tenant union of Barcelona, **Irene Escorihuela** and the head of the housing department of Barcelona, **Javier Buron**, took place.

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⁴ <http://www.construmat.com/en/congreso-vivienda-social>